

The Institution of his last Supper.



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& bleis'd & brake it & gaue to them & said,
Take eat, this is my body.

And he took y Cup & when he had given thanks
he gaue it to them & they all dranke of it.

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THE
Penitent Christian,
Fitted with
Meditations and Prayers,
FOR
The Devout Receiving
OF THE
HOLY SACRAMENT
OF THE
Lords Supper.

By *LEWIS SOUTHCOMB*,
Rector of *Rose-Ash* in the County of
DEVON.

For the Benefit of the People under his
Charge, and Others.

*St. John 6. 56. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh
my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

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to the King's most Excellent Majesty, 1682.

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TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God,
THOMAS
Lord Bishop of *Exon.*

My Lord,

I *were a piece of very great and intolerable vanity, (which would need a bigger Apology than even the prefixing your Lordship's great Name to this mean Discourse) to think, that I could say any thing more or better than what has been already said on this Subject: particularly of late years by the Pious and Learned Dr. Patrick, in his three several excellent Treatises of the Holy Sacrament. I can therefore truly assure your Lordship, that I was very far from any such perswasion or thought in the publishing these Sheets.*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

The chief reasons that I had to do it were two: First, that as this plain Discourse was primarily design'd only for the benefit and use of the people of my particular Charge; so are there some things in it fitted for their peculiar needs and tempers: with which no man can be so well acquainted as myself. The other reason was, that though I could easily have recommended them to very many far better Treatises of those holy Mysteries, yet I have observ'd, that most men are much more ready to read attentively, and seriously consider any thing publisht by a person whom they know, and with whom they daily converse, (& by whose Neighbourhood and Conversation, they have contracted a particular Friendship and Familiarity with him, which begets a mutual confidence and endearment) than they would, a better Discourse of one altogether unknown to them. For their sakes therefore, chiefly have I adventured it abroad: but if it may be useful to any other the meanest Soul, in the promoting a more frequent and

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and Devout use of this deplorably neglected Duty, I shall have my desire and aim. And in prospect of that end and Design, shall be content to run the adventure of the Censures of all men whatever. Against which, I shall be the better guarded, if the many imperfections of this Discourse, (particularly it's extraordinary plainness even to a fault, though in that, it is adjusted to the Capacities of them to whom it was first delivered, and for whom it is principally intended) may not hinder your Lordships vouchsafing me and it your Blessing and your Patronage.

I cannot but remember your Lordships great earnestness at a late Visitation, in pressing us of the Clergy, to recommend a more frequent and Universal practise of this Duty to our People. And I thank God, this small evidence of my obedience to that injunction, as it brought with it some considerable success to my People, so I have great reason to believe, that (how mean soever it really be) by putting it into their hands, it may be

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greater

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*greater yet. However such as it is,
it is humbly laid at your Lordship's
Feet, by*

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

**affectionate honourer, and
faithfully devoted Servant**

Lewis Southcomb.

To

*To the People of his Charge,
the Parishioners of Rose-Ash
in the County of Devon.*

My Friends and Neighbours,

IT has long been my great wonder and trouble too, to see so many of you who are constant frequenters of most other publick Offices of the Church, and seem to be great Lovers and Friends of it, to be so negligent and backward in your coming to the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

I must confess, I have not altogether so much reason to complain of this now, as I have

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had heretofore ; but however, I am sure there is yet too much reason for such a Complaint as this. That the necessity and meaning, the benefits and advantages of this *Christian Sacrifice*, should be no better understood and considered ; and the Table of our dear Redeemer so unfrequented, deserves to be bewailed with tears of blood : and there may be reason to fear, that the omission of this holy duty is one crying Sin of the Nation.

The concernment that I ought to have for you, in that Relation which I bear to you, makes me willing to hope, you will no longer be partakers in this too common guilt. What other

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other mens Reasons for this great Neglect may be, I know not ; But I have some cause to think, that the chief ground of your too seldom approaching these holy Myſteries is this, that you are not ſatisfied of your preparations, or not ſufficiently perſwaded, wheher your Examination and your Faith, your Repentance, or your Charity are ſuch as they ought to be, and ſo tremble at the thoughts of unworthy receiving, and are reſolv'd to let it alone, and by ſo doing, at once, rob the Soul of it's greateſt Priviledge, and higheſt Duty. If this be your Caſe, give me leave to enquire, If you were not ſatisfied as to the Settlement of an *Eſtate*, would you

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you not willingly ask Counsel of the *Lawyer*? or if you were afraid of the State of your *health*, would you not run for the Direction of the *Physician*? If so, let me beseech you, in matter of doubt or Scruple or dissatisfaction of Conscience, if you think not fit to advise with me, do it with some other Minister of Religion of greater abilities; and not let your doubts and scruples keep you from this Solemn *Act Christian Worship*, when you may so easily have them satisfied. The only Reasons that I can think of, why you should not readily and willingly do so, are these, Either first, you question our *willingness to offer you satisfaction*
if

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if you come, and that we are loath to be troubled; Or Secondly, you *question our ability*, and think you can judge of your own state, as well as a Guide of Souls. Or, thirdly, you cannot *conquer your own loathness* and unwillingness and fears so to do. Or fourthly, you are afraid we would *despise you* for so doing, or make known the *secrets* of your Soul.

To all which therefore I shall briefly answer.

First, If you question my *willingness* to endeavour to remove, and satisfy your doubts, or think me unwilling to hear you, and suppose me loath to be troubled, I do as to this as-
sure

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sure you, that you will find me (by God's assistance) as ready to endeavour your satisfaction, as to take the Tenth of your Possessions; and as we of the Ministry love our *own* eternal Interest, so we cannot but be concern'd for the future safety of *your* Souls, when our neglects would endanger the security of our own.

But secondly, it may be 'tis our *ability* you doubt of, and think you can judge of your own State as well as a *Spiritual Guide*. To this I answer, that though it may be we are not all good *Lawyers*, or skilful *Physicians*, or *cunning managers* of our affairs of this World, yet 'tis not to be supposed but that
such

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such who have made it the chief business of their life, to know the mind and will of God, should at least know somewhat more of it than they who have been bred up in other Employments. Besides, though you should suppose us to understand but little more of Divine things than yourselves, yet consider, few men can so well judge of their own state and case as another for them. But to put an end to this question, I shall for my self declare and promise, that if any of your scruples of Conscience in this Case (or any other) should be such, as that you shall think my directions not to be safe and satisfactory,
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that then, I will undertake, to procure you the opinion of some or one of the most wise, and holy and learned persons of the Nation without giving you any further trouble.

But thirdly, it may be you are willing to receive advice and directions in any scruples of Conscience, but you cannot conquer *your own loathness and unwillingness, and secret fears*, when you would make them known; If this be your Case, I answer. Be pleas'd to consider, what you would do, if you were really in as good earnest with Almighty God and your Souls, as you are with respect to your *Bodies and Estates*; and why should it be thought more a
shame

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shame to be concern'd for an immortal Soul than for a temporal Interest? when in truth it will be esteemed far more creditable and prudent too by all good men? and as for others, for ill men, no matter what they shall think of you for so doing. Nay, as all wise and holy men will infallibly respect you much the more for so doing, so also all the profane sort of the World, that outwardly reproach and scoff at you for it, will inwardly and really reverence you the more. Besides, sit down a little, and when you are next private and alone, consider seriously what you would do on a sick Bed; is not the company of a Guide
of

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of Souls welcome then ? is not his advice thankfully received, and joyfully pursued, and his prayers for you look't on as the greatest kindness he can do for you ? Remember *it will come to this again* : and why then should you not be ready to advise with them sooner as well as later , when they are capable of doing you more good, and you capable to perform more. And would you once but thoroughly perswade your selves of this as a great trueth , that a pious Person would have a much greater value and esteem for you, for such a care of your Souls, I am apt to think , that then you would as readily apply your selves

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selves to them in such Cases, as you would be to make an advantageous bargain.

Consider further, Self-denial is a great Christian-Duty, (St. Matt. 16. 24.) and to do violence to our selves in conquering and subduing that unwillingness that we have to open a doubt or scruple of Conscience to a Minister of Religion, would be one great Exercise of that Duty.

Fourthly, possibly neither of these may be the reasons, why you will not ask their Counsel or direction ; but you are afraid that we would despise you for so doing, or make known the secrets of your Soul. I answer, so far should we be from this, that
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we should look upon them that would so do, to have a greater care of, and concernment for their eternal safety, than the generality of the World have; we should esteem you as those that are in good earnest with God and their Souls; we should from thence have good ground of reason to believe, that Religion is the Practice of such, not their Profession only. Nay, we should be apt to hope, that our pains and labours have had some success with them, and that they are truly willing to be in safety with Jesus at Jerusalem, when they thus are desirous, that a Spiritual Guide should take them by the hand, and assist and direct them

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them in their Journies thither. And then as for your fear that we will make known the Secrets of your Souls which you should at any time discover to us, this is unreasonable; for as 'tis highly disingenuous, and unjust so to do, so are we strictly bound by the Canons, (that is, by the wholesome and excellent Laws

of the Church, which
Can. 113. every one of us have engaged to observe and obey) to conceal all such cases; and not at any time to reveal and make known to any person whatever, any such trust committed to us.

Having thus taken off your great objection, I see nothing more that you can justly plead
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in excuse for your absenting your Selves, but what may possibly be spoken to in the following book.

If you shall not here meet with helps sufficient to direct you, in the particulars of *Self Examination*, or in your Meditations when you are at the holy Table, that want will be abundantly supplied by another book, I mean, *The whole Duty of Man*; a book, which as you tender the welfare of your Souls, I desire no one family may be without.

Two sorts of persons there are among you, which I would desire chiefly to read and consider this discourse; First, those who wholly absent themselves

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selves : Secondly, those who though they do not wholly neglect this Duty ; yet come to it very seldom. *As for them that wholly absent themselves,* my business in these Papers, is to invite them earnestly to fit and prepare their Soul to come and take the very next opportunities that shall be given them, whatsoever pain or self-denial it shall cost them, to put on the Wedding-Garment, lest all opportunities may shortly be at an end and over, and they be found in the day of Judgment, to have lived and dyed in the guilt of this dangerous neglect. *As for them who sometimes come, but very rarely,* my earnest desire of them is,

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is, to fit and prepare the Soul
to come more frequently, and
that they may be so persever-
ing in this frequency, that
whenever their Lord shall
come, he may come and find them
so doing: At least, that he may
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habitually disposed for it, and
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That the good God of his
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Your Friend and Servant

in our Saviour.

Lewis Southcomb.

OF THE
HOLY SACRAMENT
OF THE
LORDS SUPPER.

CHAP. I.

THE first great *Infelicity* that befel the World, was the fall of *Adam*, by which he lost Paradise, and he and his Posterity became incapable of being saved by the terms of the *first Covenant*. But the greatest *Blessing* that was ever vouchsaf'd to the Sons of Men, was the coming of our Saviour, to restore us the hopeful possibilities of Salvation; to establish a *new Covenant*, between God and us, and to seal it by his Blood.

As in our Baptism we were received into this Covenant of Grace and Mercy,
B so

The Preface.

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so have we since *stained* and *polluted* these *white* Robes by unholyness and disobedience; and broken our part of the Covenant. But now that we should refuse, when we are called and invited, to come *and renew it* in the Holy Sacrament, that we should refuse to come with the rest of our Brethren, and commemorate the dying Love of this our Lord, is equally strange and deplorable.

I shall therefore upon this consideration, and because the great *Festival* set apart in memory of our Saviour's *Resurrection* from the Grave, is at hand, offer you some Meditations, touching that Holy and Comfortable, that Divine and Heavenly action; that so we may come to our Lord, who has already invited us *willingly and chearfully; faithfully and cheerfully; humbly and penitently; with Love and Devotion*; and be found by him have that Wedding-Garment on, which may be accepted by him now, and in the day of Judgment.

Though there are some, and the

† Dr. Hammond,
and Gomar. Cam-
mero. Synop.

† great Men, that suppose
the words of the Text
not directly and properly
spoken of the Holy Sac-

rament, because it *was not then instituted*

* *Pro Carne Corpus habet Syrus, quæ vox est in Euchar. institutione legitur, ad quam hic tanta quedam allusio est Grot. in v. 53.*

† *Luc. Brugenſis Mal. citant Synop.*

* *Dr. Sherlock of Religious Assemblies.*

yet because * others doubt not but there is a respect had to it, being shortly after to be instituted ; and there are † some that say expressly, that it is to be understood and meant of the Sacramental eating ; and a * great and excellent persons sayes,

he does not in the least doubt of it. I shall not therefore question to understand and take the words in the same sence also.

From which I might offer this Doctrine,

That worthily, and with a due preparation, to eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of our Saviour, shall, by placing him in our heart, and us in his, unite us more closely to him ; and is an happy earnest of Eternal Salvation.

For the Proof and Confirmation of which, I might instance, in St. Jo. 6. 54. 57. 58. 1 Cor. 10. 16. 17. and many other places of Holy Scripture. But to make the Text more useful to our present designs, I shall from it speak to 4 things.

First, I shall briefly shew you, that this is a necessary holy and Christian Duty to be frequently performed by us, and the neglect of it infinitely dangerous.

Secondly, I shall consider to what end it was instituted or appointed by our Blessed Saviour.

Thirdly, Shew how we are to come prepared to partake of these holy Mysteries.

Fourthly and Lastly, insist upon 4 or 5 Considerations after Receiving.

First, that this is a necessary, holy and Christian Duty, to be frequently performed, and the neglect dangerous.

For whatever we have an express Command of our Saviour, unquestionably it requires our *obedience*, and is our indispensable *duty*, to be obeyed by us readily and willingly, with Sincerity and Constancy; And this was one of the last injunctions which our dear Redeemer, a little before his Death was pleas'd to leave with us. *Lu. 22. 19. --- This do in remembrance of me.* And that we might have the more full assurance of the truth of it, the blessed Apostle, when he speaks of this institution and command of our Saviour, sayes, I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you

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you, that *the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, &c.*

1 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25, 26. --- I have (sayes he) received of the Lord, as if he had said, though I were not my self present, when our Lord ordained and appointed this Memorial of his death and suffering, by which we that name his Name, are to shew forth his death till he come; yet I do assure you, that I received it *Grot.*
(that is, either by the other Apostles, who were both Ear and Eye-witnesses, or by immediate Revelation from Heaven) from our Saviour, that the very same Night in which he was betrayed, soon after to be buffeted, reviled, scourged, spit on, crucified for our Salvation, that he instituted this holy Feast, to be continued to the end of the World.

But then as this is a necessary and unquestionable Duty, so is it to be performed not only once in the whole Course of our Lives, once in this our present State and no more; or once at the hour of Death, as some of us are too apt to suppose, and as willing to shew by their practice; but a holy and heavenly Duty to be performed more frequently. And for a Confirmation of this, let us see. First, what the holy *Scriptures* say to the frequency

quency of this action. Secondly, what was the *Practice* and the *Custom* of the first *Worthies* of the Christian *Church*, shortly after our Saviour's time. Thirdly, Lay down some *Reasons* for our frequent attendance on those holy *Mysteries*.

And if from all these we find cause for our often Communicating at the Lord's Table; if from Scripture, from the practice of the first and purest ages of the Church of Christ, and from Reason too; then I hope that each soul present will lay this home to his own heart, and take it into his most serious consideration, and then ever for the time to come, endeavour to make up his *former too great neglects* by his *future frequency* in this holy Duty.

First, let us see what those Scripture are, that either countenance or imply the frequent performance of this holy action; for this let us consider *Act. 2. 42. They continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine in breaking of bread and prayers.* We read *Act. 2. 7.* that on the first day of the Week, they usually came together to break Bread. So also 'tis said *1 Cor. 11. 25. Do this as often as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me.* The word [*stedfastly*]

as is observed by a * Pious and Learned Person, denotes the frequency of the action, and the words [as often] may imply it also.

* Dr P. Christian Sacrifice.

Oh here then before we pass any further, let us fix our thoughts and consider, if those who first named the Name of Christ, *continued* in it so *stedfastly*, if at least on the first day of the week, out of their flaming Love and Affection to their dear Lord and Master, they remembered his Death with praise and thanksgivings; how ill Copiers out of so holy and blessed an *Example* are some of us? They were it seems so *ready* to commemorate their dying Lord, so full of Zeal, so *willing and forward*, to go forth to meet him at his Table; that they scarce ever put off their Wedding Garment, but their whole lives were a constant and habitual preparation for this holy Feast. Whereas in this declining Age of the Gospel, in which holiness so visibly decays, how loath are we to approach him? how uneasie when we are there? how joyful when we are gone? So unwilling, that alas! we must be even hal'd and drag'd to it. And it may be feared, that some of us could even wish it over, and at an end already.

Why, what's the Reason of this unwillingness, this backwardness, this loathsomeness to go to meet the Lord of life in the most *holy and sweet and pleasant Duty* in the World? Is there so much charge, or difficulty in it; or is it so hard to be performed? O what is there in this holy Action, that any Soul that professes the Religion of the ever Blessed Jesus should have such an aversness to it? Say, are there any expensive *chargeable Sacrifices* to be offered? any *Firstlings* of our *Flocks* to be slain? No, why what's then the Cause, that we should not be as ready and forward, and, (when any opportunities are offered us to remember the death of our Great Master in this holy Mystery) as constant too, as the Sun is to run his race? Alas! our great Reason is, That the *Wedding-Garment of Religion and Holyness, Repentance and Reformation of our Lives, Charity and Devotion* does not please us; We are loath to put it on, it sits uneasie about us: we are hugely unwilling to put off the old *spotted rayment* of Sin and Iniquity, of Wrath and Malice, and Irreligion. We find no tast, no relish, in the *Sweets and Delicacies of Piety and Vertue.*

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We are willing enough doubtless to meet our Lord, that is, if we thought he would receive and welcome us, with our sins about us, and with our old affections to them; then would we continue as stedfastly in breaking of bread and prayers, as ever the first Worthies did, (though it were *Id. ibid. p. 9.* twice a day, as is with great reason supposed they did of old.) Were those arms that were once stretcht upon the Cross, and still are *open* to receive the true penitent, were they but as *open* too, to receive the habitually disobedient and impenitent, then would we frequent the Lord's Table.

But does not the Wedding-Garment of Faith and Repentance and Charity, and Devotion and the like, does not this please us? Give me leave to ask, (as the Apostle did in another case) unto what then were ye Baptized? have ye *put on Christ* for this? And was it for this that we were early *dedicated to him* in Baptism, and *received into the Covenant of Grace* and Mercy; that when we with the Disciples of old, should have continued stedfastly to renew this Covenant in the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and to *offer* what was then *done* for us, when we

could do nothing for our selves, and come and declare our *willingness to stand to those Engagements* then made for us; to come and in person to shew our readiness and our willingness to follow him in the ways of his Commands and holy Religion; that *then* we should refuse it? or if we do not refuse it, yet come so seldom, *as if we desired to be excused from it.* Whither, Oh whither will our Indevotion, our Lukewarmness, our Inconsideration carry us! Is this to act as they who now sit at Peace and rest in the Mansions of Glory, have done before us? And has not our Lord shed as much blood for us as for them? And are not our hopes and Promises and Expectations the same which they had? why then, *Cur non possumus quod isti & ista?* as the pious Father said of old. Why cannot we (at least in far better measures than now) do as they have done before us? whence is it then that our Practice is gone so far off from their frequency in this Heavenly action, their zeal and their fervour?

Certainly, this must of necessity proceed from a great and most deplorable want of Love to our Religion, or of Zeal for our Saviour, from a stupid unconcernment for a joyful Resurrection: or (as was before

fore hinted) because we find no *tast* or *relish* in this heavenly food, this food of Angels, or from *intolerable inconsideration*. Hence, O hence is it in a great measure, that our *Lives* are so *unholy*, our *Actions* so *uncharitable* and *unchristian*, our *thoughts* so *impure* and *prophane* and *inconsiderate*, and the *whole frame* of our *Live* so *disordered* and *discomposed*; and as this chiefly for want of a more frequent and devout use of these holy Mysteries.

“Whence (sayes one) came the Sanctity and Holiness of the first Christians? Whence came their strict observation of the Divine Commandments? whence was it that they persevered in holy Actions with a comfortable hope and unwearied diligence? from whence came their despising the World, their universal Charity? whence came these and many other Excellencies, but from a constant Devotion and frequent Communion? They who every day represented the Death of Christ, every day were ready to dye for Christ.

We look upon that body to be sickly, distempered and diseased, and dangerously ill, that allways loaths it's wholesome food, and has no appetite to that which would be its only, or it's best nourishment.

ment. Thus, O thus ! it is in the Case of the Soul ; how *sickly and distempered*, how *diseased* and disordered must that Soul needs be, that *loaths* it's most wholesome food, the food of Angels ? this *non-nourishment* of the holy Sacrament ; which if duely and devoutly taken, would so *non-nourish* it up to Salvation as to make it more *healthful* and holy, more *cheerful* and religious, more just and upright, more pure and devout and Angelical ; 'T would make it much more ready for the performance of any other Duty, more full of zeal and fervour, more constant and unwearied in all Religious actions. In short, 'twould make it more ready for Death and Immortality.

The holy Sacrament is call'd by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 10. 16. "The Cup of Blessing, and surely if we do not thirst after this Cup of Blessing, Blessing may be far from us : Neither is it imaginable, That that man should love Heaven and his Soul, or felicity or his Lord, that desires not frequently to bath in that wholesome stream, the blood of that immaculate Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of the World.

Having thus seen what these texts of *Scripture* are that imply a frequency of Communicating

Communicating, we shall briefly consider the second thing.

Secondly, let us see what was the *custom* and the *practice* of the first Worthies of the Christian Church shortly after our Saviour's time; and if in a few Instances we find them frequently meeting and representing the death of their and our Common Lord and Master, Let us (remembering he has done and suffered as much for us as he had done for them) ever hereafter fit the Soul to take all opportunities we are able, to do in some degree as they have done before us.

The first Instance I shall produce, shall be of a great and holy man, a Bishop of the Church of Christ; *St. cypr.* who lived above two hundred and fifty years after our Saviour Christ; he tells us, that the Custom of receiving it daily was observ'd in his days.

Another who liv'd above three hundred years from our Saviour, *St. Ambro.* says, Receive that every day, which may profit thee every day. And no less than a whole Council or Assembly of Devout men at *Antioch*, (the place where the Disciples were first called Christians, as we are told *Act. 11. 26.* though not at the same time) decreed some

some ages since our Saviour's time, that those should be excommunicated, cast out of the Church, who came to other holy offices and divine Services, but went away without receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

And, (to mention no more) a Reverend Father of the Church, who
St. Jerom. liv'd about four hundred years from Christ's time, saies the practice of daily receiving was continued to his time. Let us then with eyes shut and arms folded, when we are next alone and retir'd from the World, in a serious thought consider, Did those of old who owned the same crucifyed Jesus with our selves, Did they as constantly do this in remembrance of him, as they did publicly meet to pray together or hear the Word? And is it come from once a day and once a week, to once a year, to once in our whole lives? Is it come to this? Is this all the sense and apprehension we have of the necessity and advantages of this duty? Is this the obedience we shew to an *Express Command* of our Saviour; either wholly to disobey it, or perform as seldom as possible we can? Is this the imitation of the practice of the first ages of Christianity? Is this all the reckoning
and

and accompt we make of that inestimable priviledge of *being in Covenant with God?* or of being called and invited to come and renew it again when we have broken our terms, and to have it signed and sealed to us again? Was it for this, O blessed Jesu! that thou hast done and suffered so much for our sakes? Was it for this that thou wert content for us to submit to an *Agony and bloody sweat, to the Cross and Passion, to a Death and Burial?* And is it for this that we have so long owned thee for our Lord and our Redeemer, a tender and merciful Saviour? that some of us should stupidly live in an habitual neglect of doing this in remembrance of thee?

And have we no greater sense of, and concernment for the last words of a dying Saviour? shall the expiring breath of a dear Redeemer poured out for our eternal Interest, be lost and in vain to any of us that call him so? O how much Reason have we to say of such, Father forgive them, (or rather, father open their eyes) for they know not what they do.

But thus (as is observ'd by an excellent Prelate now with God) *it hath*
fared with this Sacrament as
with other Actions of Reli-
gion which have descended

Bishop Tay-
lor's life of
Christ.

from

from Flames, (the Flames of the Devotion of the first ages) to still Fires, from Fires, to Sparks, from Sparks to Embers from Embers to Smoke, from Smoke to Nothing.

But in the Name of God let me enquire, are we willing to make *any* publick, thankfull, joyfull, acknowledgments *at all* of the love of our crucified Jesus, and the great things he has done and undergone for the redemption of us and of our Children after us? if not, we are monsters of Ingratitude and Impiety. If we are at all willing so to do, why shall we not fit our soul to take all possible opportunities, while we are yet here below, and at this distance from him, to do this in remembrance of him?

How can we think that our other Devotions shall be prevalent with, or acceptable to the Holy God without the Intercession of our Saviour? and the merit of his sufferings? and yet this is the way he hath appointed to give our prayers an Interest in his Sacrifice. Can we reasonably suppose, that indeed any Duties whatever and the performance of them shall be accepted, when this great and solemn act of Religious worship shall be refused, omitted and neglected?

O let us in our next retirements, when we are withdrawn from the noise and tumult, and business and thoughts of the world, deeply think, should we not have reason to be afraid, that *no Petitions of ours, no Devotions, no works of Mercy, Piety, or Charity, no Fastings or Alms, no hearings or readings*, shall be accepted without this part of our Christian Worship; Would it not further be a sad and dismal consideration, to remember in the hour of Death or day of Judgment, that these and many other holy Actions shall fall to the ground, being vain and lost, only for our *wilful neglect* of this holy Sacrament.

Again in the same retirement from the World, and in your next meditations, consider, what could you think of a rich and very wealthy person, that never in all his life should be perswaded to bestow so much as the worth of a farthing to the poor and needy? Or, what thoughts should we have of him, who never in the whole course of his life, should offer up a prayer to God, either in publick or in secret? The same may we think of him that would never accept of an Invitation to sit and trim the Soul, to come, and with the rest of his Christian Brethren to partake of these holy Mysteries: for they did
but

but disobey a plain Command of our Saviour's; the one only disobeyed the command of *feeding the hungry, and cloathing the naked*, the other only refused obedience to the Command of *praying without ceasing*; So the wilfull absenter from the holy Supper of the Lord, only dissobeys the Command of *Do this*. Nay, I look upon this to be a greater piece of disobedience, because in this there is an obligation of love, Love infinite and unspeakable, an obligation of thanks and gratitude to engage us. Do this in remembrance of me the Lord that bought you, the Lord that pay'd down the dear price of his blood & Wounds, sweat and groans, pains and death for you.

Give me leave to say further, I shall never, I can never truly believe, you have any tolerable care of your souls, till I see this Holy Sacrament more frequented; till I see some evidence of your greater love to these holy Mysteries. Not however, as if I would perswade, or give encouragement by this, to wicked men while they continue such, to approach this heavenly feast. But for those who resolve heartily by divine Grace to reform their lives, and (amidst the disadvantages of this life) are fully purposed, to Devote themselves

selves in sincerity, though not in perfection, to the Laws of our holy Religion; whatever else you do, yet I shall never, I can never suppose you have any tolerable Love or Zeal for our Dear Redeemer, while you habitually turn your back on his *Holy Table*. Nor can your constant attendance at the house of Prayer; your Zeal and Devotion there, your justice and integrity in dealing, your sobriety and purity of life, be sufficient to persuade me to think you have any truly considerable value for immortality, or that you make any tolerable provisions for a happy Resurrection, while you wilfully deny your selves the privilege of feasting on the Body and Blood of our common Lord, by which new life and Grace is conveyed to us.

O how can I believe, you truly and earnestly repent of your Iniquities, and desire a pardon of your Sins, when you will not be at the pains to prepare your selves to come and beg it, and to have it seal'd to you? Or how can I think, that you desire to be firmly united to Christ our head, or to be united to each other, when you refuse to come and strengthen the Union?

Surely

Surely, one might be apt to think we have lost all sense and remembrance of the Love of God in sending his Son, and of the Son in coming to lay down his life for us, by this one intolerable neglect of ours. How can we go to God in our Prayers, and plead to him the meritorious Death and suffering of our Saviour, and yet refuse *to shew forth the Lord's Death till he come?* and wholly slight, or very seldom attend on this highest Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving? How long shall we call the Holy Jesus *Lord, and not do what he saith?* How long shall we thus refuse to keep the memorial of dying Love, and obey a Command pronounc'd by his expiring breath?

Little, O little do you consider how great a reproach to Christianity it self, and how dangerous to your invaluable Souls, the constant omission of this one excellent part of Christian Worship is.

Consider, we do all believe, that Christ dyed for Sinners, and we have had the happiness to have been baptized into this belief; we do profess to believe, that *there is no other name under Heaven by which we must be saved.* We all hope that his merits shall be applyed to us, that so we may for ever partake of these benefits purchased

chased for us ; and yet we are so imprudent, as that we will not have them applied in such ways, as he himself hath appointed, in the performance of those Conditions, and the use of those means which he himself has ordained to that end and purpose.

“And (to use the words of a learned person) I see no reason why

“men may not as well hope

“to be saved without Holiness by Christ, as well as

*Dr. Sherlock
of Religious
Assemblies.*

“without eating his flesh, and drinking his

“blood in the Sacrament. For Holiness

“will not save us without the merits of

“Christ, and I know not how we should

“come by the merit of Christ, but only in

“such ways of dispensing, conveying and

“applying them as he himself hath ap-

“pointed; & he has appointed no other or-

“dinary way but this Mysterious Supper.

Having seen the Custom and practice of the first Worthies of the Christian Church in the purest ages ; I shall upon the whole offer this further consideration to common reason, Whether do we now suppose is most safe and Holy, to imitate as far as we are able, this pious practice of theirs of a very frequent communicating, (remembering also, that those De-

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vout Souls who lived so near the time of our Saviour, better knew his mind in such cases, than we, at this distance) or, very rarely to address our selves to this Solemn Act of Christian worship ? In which are we more likely to please God and our Saviour, to do his will, and provide for a joyful Resurrection ?

Thirdly, Let us see and consider a few Reasons for the frequency of communicating.

The first is this; That as our breaches of our part of the Covenant are too frequent ; so, seeing God is willing that yet we should renew this Covenant again, and Seal it at the Lord's Table ; how infinitely willing should we then be of so doing ? The Covenant which we entred into with God in our Baptism, is this, *Almighty God is pleas'd on his part to promise Pardon of Sin, Grace and Glory, if we perform the Conditions of Faith and Repentance, and sincere, (though not perfect) Obedience.* Here then let us fix our foot and consider, how frequently, how miserably, have we broken our part of this Covenant of Grace ! and is it not infinite mercy, tenderness and compassion, that God is still content and willing that we should come and renew this gracious Covenant ? Shall not

not we be ready and desirous to renew it for our own safety; our eternal security; shall not we be willing and earnest so to do, when our God is willing; and when he calls and invites us to it? shall we not be ready and willing to renew it often, when the great God often calls and invites us to it? *Oh how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation!*

A *second Reason* for our frequent approaching this holy Table, is, *That this is a Holy Duty which if duly and devoutly performed, conveys great comforts, benefits, and blessings to us.* Thus, Oh how would it confirm, strengthen and encrease our *Faith*? how would it promote and heighten our *Love* to our *Lord and Master Jesus*, and make it more flaming and ardent, more like the *Zeal and Affection* of the *Cherubims and Seraphims*?

How would it promote and encourage *Religion and a Universally Holy Life*? How would it it promote *our Peace, and Charity* and *Love and mutual Endearments* to each other, as we are travelling together over this *Wilderness* to the *Land of Canaan*, as we are passing along together over this *World* on in our journey to *Jesus and Jerusalem*.

How would it strengthen and confirm
our

our *Hopes*? How would it make our *Repentance* more serious, more deep, and more effectual, Our *holy Resolutions* more fixt and stedfast?

How would it help us to *subdue*, and get the victory over our *Iniquities*, over our bosom darling Sin, whether it were the Sin of our Calling, or the Sin of our Company, or the Sin of our Constitution? How would it encourage us in all that is good, in all that's *holy*, in all that's *just*, and all that's *upright*, and bring us to a better knowledge of our own State and condition of Soul? How would it bring us to a nearer and more intimate acquaintance with the Holy Jesus, and with our selves also? What aids and assistances of the Grace and Spirit of God should we receive with it? These and many more than these are the blessings, and benefits, and advantages, which a frequent and devout communicating would convey to us. Say now, are not these great and inestimable blessings? Are not these desirable? Are they not truly amiable and lovely? and to be earnestly wished for by all those whose hopes and expectations are in another World and not in this?

What, (my Beloved,) is it not an unvaluable blessing to have our Faith increased?

treasured? and yet by the due and constant participation of these Holy Mysteries, to how divine a pitch, and height, would it be raised? Is it nothing to have our hope confirmed? and yet by our frequent attendance on this holy Table, how full and lively, how raised and chearful would it be? how much a better ground and foundation should we have for it?

Is it nothing to have our Zeal, and Love to our crucified Lord, more inflamed and heightened? and yet oh how would the due frequentation of this Solemn act of Religious worship, exalt and raise and carry up our Souls to him, and make them mount up upon the wings of Devotion, almost high enough to reach the pitch of Angels and freer Spirits? Is it nothing, to have our mutual Charity, and Unity, Forbearance and Forgiveness of one another promoted, as we are going on together to the Grave and Immortality? why, nothing will so effectually do this, as the frequent meeting our Lord at this Heavenly Feast.

Is it not a bless'd advantage and benefit to have our Reformation made more sincere, effectual and persevering? and yet in the devout and frequent use of those

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holy Myſteries, we ſhould find more reaſons and arguments and encouragements for it than we could before imagine. We ſhould find, that in the ways of Religion and Holyness and Virtue, we can do more by Divine aſſiſtance, than before we thought we could; and that in our moving towards the degrees of perfection, we can go farther than before we ſuppoſed we were able.

Is it not a bleſſing to have a greater power and ability and ſtrength to ſubdue a temptation, and to beat down and conquer a ſtubborn and rebellious Sin? Is it not a bleſſing to come to a more intimate and near acquaintance with our Souls, and how their accompts ſtand with reference to a joyful Reſurrection and happy Eternity?

Is it not a bleſſing to come at laſt to be delighted with, and encouraged in, and taſt the ſweets and delicacies, the lightſomneſs and chearfulneſs of heart that accompany a truly Religious Life? If theſe are bleſſings truly deſirable and amiable, why, never ſhall we come to have them ſo effectually conveyed to us as by our frequent and devout attendance on this Chriſtian Sacrifice. And aſſure your ſelves, that upon your own

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Experience, you will find it an undeniable truth, that there is not one of these *Benefits, Blessings and Advantages*, but would (if we are not wanting to our selves) be dispensed to us. Well then, seeing our hopes and promises, are not so much here below, and we daily look when we shall be received to our unknown Society, and unknown Condition, methinks these should be irresistible reasons for a frequent and holy use of these Divine Mysteries.

Thirdly, *Another reason is, that our frequent presenting our selves at the Table of the Lord, would be a great Sign of our Love to Religion and Virtue.* It would argue our love to Religion, as this is one great and solemn part of it, and as it is an Exercise of many *Christian Graces* and Virtues. It would argue our deep apprehension and consideration of *another World*. 'Twould be an evidence of our desires to make seasonable a provision for *Immortality*, and of our endeavours to be such as our Lord would have us. 'Twould be one great Argument that we desired to be imployed and bear a part in *Religious actions*, with the rest of our Christian brethren, whenever we have opportunities, that we are earnest-

ly willing to bear a part with those holy Souls here below, among whom we would *stand* in the day of Judgment. 'Twould evidence that *our Faith* is lively, vital and obedient, that *our Charity* is truly Christian, that Religion is our *practice*, not our *profession* only. 'Twould argue, that we are willing to *stand* to the *engagements* of our *Baptism*, to our utmost; that we resolve manfully to *Fight* under the *Banner* of our Jesus, against Sin, the World, and Devil, That we are willing to submit our selves to the Gospel, and to take on us Christ's easie yoke and light burden. Nay, a frequent and devout communicating would be a great Sign of *our Devotion and frequency* in, and love to all other Religious actions.

And indeed how sad and deplorable an evidence, does the wilful refuser give of his prophaneness, his little love to Religion, and of his inconsideration? whereas I say, a due and frequent performance of this holy duty, would argue the contrary; would be a good Testimony of our desires to please God, and draw near to him; that we are wearied and laden with our iniquities, when we thus bring them to Jesus to be cast out, and

and when we come to take new Resolutions against them.

O may these considerations woo and win us over, perswade invite and encourage us to meet the holy Bridegroom of our Souls, who has appointed when and where to meet us! He has given the invitation, he has made the appointment, and shall not we go forth to meet him? why shall we so imprudently any longer refuse to give him those demonstrations of our Love to him and his Religion?

Rather let us say, this day with one heart, and one voice, and one consent, in the words of holy *David*, *Psf. 40. 7. 8. Lo I come to do thy will O God. I come O Jesu to renew that Covenant with thee, which (and 'tis a sad truth) I have so miserably broken. I bless thee for the Call, and I come quickly to celebrate the memory of thy dying-Love. I come to own that I am a member (though unworthy) of thy Spouse the Church, and come with the rest of my Brethren, to beg a portion and an Interest in thy meritorious death and sufferings. I thank thee eternally for the Invitation, and I come with the rest of that body of which thou art the head, to wash in that Fountain that was opened for sin and for uncleanness, and would not be found out of the number of*

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30 *Of the Sacrament of* Ch. I.

those holy Souls that are devoutly going to meet thee, for the whole World, in the day of Rewards and Punishments. Thou hast done as much for me as for any one of them; with them therefore I thankfully come to do thy Will, to do this in remembrance of thee.

O that thus we would be winn'd and woo'd to this holy action, by arguments of Love to Religion, by arguments of Zeal and Devotion, fervour, desire, gratitude and affection! and let us not be hall'd and dragg'd to it, only by the apprehensions of Terroures and Horroures, Hell and Damnation.

And may we yet grow and still encrease in our Love to this holy Sacrament, so much and so long, till we come to desire it, and wish and long for it!

*Bishop Taylor
Preface to holy
Living.*

Drexel.

Which a great Prelate of our own, and another pious person make (to use their own words) one of *their twelve signs of Grace, and Predestination to Eternal life.*

May our love of it then so increase, till we come to be able to think it *too long* that our *Lord tarries*; *too long* till the opportunities of Supping with him come about; *too long* before the time come when

when we may meet him once more in his own House at his own Table; and to be able, with a full and teeming heart, to say of his coming to us in that Sacrament, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*, thou hast long tarried from that Soul that loves thee, from that Soul that *thou knowest loves thee*. St. Jo. 21. 15.

Fourthly, the 4th and last Reason that I shall mention is, *that a frequent and devout Communicating, would be an undeniable argument of our flaming affection to and Love of Jesus.*

How can it be reasonably suppos'd we should have any tolerable affection for that man from whose company we all-ways desired to be excused? from whom we run when he calls and invites us? upon whom we turn our backs when he sends to us to come and Sup with him? Can we truly call him our Familiar acquaintance or intimate friend, with whom we never care to be? This, O this is the Case between our Master Jesus and some of us that call him so.

But if we *call him Master*, for shame let us no more refuse to apply our selves to this highest and chiefest piece of Service; If we call him Lord, let us *do what he says*, and he has said, — *do this*. If

we call him Friend, (the Worlds best Friend) let us make hast, and be glad to go forth to meet him. Let us be joyful, that he is willing once more before we dye, to come to us and to invite us to come to him. Let us not think it much to lay aside our old *spotted Garments* when we are going to meet our Friend, the World's best Friend Jesus. Let us not think it much to put on our *best Array*, our Wedding-Garment when we are hastening to go forth to meet our Friend, the World's best Friend Jesus.

If we call him the *Captain of our Salvation*, then let us go and Solemnly declare and own our selves his Soldiers, and not shrink and stay behind, when the rest of his great *Army with Banners* (*Cant. 6. 10.*) is going so to do: but let us also go and declare our intentions and resolutions to follow him whithersoever he shall please to call us, though it be to lay down our lives for him, (and yet in doing so, we should do no more than he has done for us.) Let us go and publish our resolutions to enter into no more leagues of Friend-ship with the *Enemies* of this our *Captain*, these enemies that once made him bleed, these enemies, (Sin I mean) that once made him sweat drops
of

of blood, these enemies that slew our Captain. Let us in our very affections renounce such Enemies, and go forth to meet our Captain, and humbly tell him, that we are purposed by his assistance and by his *conduct* thus to do. Let us tell him, that we are resolv'd to *renew the Combat*, and reinforce our diligence with all our *strength*, never more to desert and leave him ; and that we are now coming to enter into this *engagement* again, and solemnly to seal it : and that as we were once lifted under him by Baptism, when we knew it not, so now when we are come to know it, we are ready and willing to stand to it to the end of our days; and are thankful too, that he has *brought us to the knowledge of this Grace, and Faith in him* : and that he has given us this one opportunity more of making solemn declaration of it at his own Table. Thus let us manifest our Love to our great Master Jesus, our best Friend, the Captain of our Salvation Jesus.

But further, if we call him Friend, and this Friend of ours, be for a while gone off from us, shall we do nothing in remembrance of him ? did he require us at parting (at least not long before he left the World) to *do something in remembrance*

34 *Of the Sacrament of* Ch. I.

of him, when he was gone, and had bid adieu to the World? Surely, if we knew not what it was, had it not been plainly revealed to us, how desirous, how earnest would we be to know it, that so we might not fail to do it? we should then (if we knew it not) be apt to say, what should it be that thou wouldst have us to do, in remembrance of such love as thine? O our Jesu what should it be? O that we could but come to the knowledge of it, that so we might instantly set about it. If so, consider then, how far should we be from refusing to do it, when we certainly know what it is.

What, is there something to be done in remembrance of *dying Love*? Something in remembrance of a *bleeding Friend*? Something in remembrance of the *great Lover of Mankind*? Something in memory of a *crucified Saviour*, and a *parting Redeemer*? Surely one would think it must needs be some very hard and uneasie duty, something next to impossible, that there should any be found in the Christian World, refusing to do this *something*; and yet all this that we refuse to do, is but to fit the Soul, and come and feast on his *body and blood*, in memory of his *Cross and Passion*: and
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is this all the difficulty in that which we are to do? tremble then, at thy monstrous Ingratitude, and never more dare either come unprepared, or to keep away.

How should this consideration rather melt us into Love? Love (in some measure) such as his, that is, dying Love? how should it swallow up all our little and trifling objections, as the Ocean swallows up a drop of water? how should such considerations melt us into tears of Love, and then into those of Repentance, and blow off all our fond excuses and vain pretences against doing this, as easily as Feathers are blown away by a violent blast of wind? What can indeed resist this, but a heart bent upon iniquity and prophaness and irreligion, a heart never opened by any serious thoughts or apprehensions of the *Love of Jesus*? and how should that consideration move us, readily and speedily to betake our selves to the putting on of the Wedding-Garment of preparation, and infallibly take the very next opportunity of coming and shewing, that we are deeply sensible of this Love, and of our former great neglects? and do it how uneasie soever some look upon that Garment.

ment to sit about them when 'tis on; do it, (that is) how much pain & loss; how much shame and reproach; how much disadvantage & self-denial soever it costs us in our endeavours to procure it; if the frequent use of those holy Mysteries will be so great an argument of our Love to Jesus.

O let it no longer therefore be said of any one of us that we should live in the habitual neglect of this known necessary duty; and let it no longer be said of us, that our Communicating was not as frequent as possible we could have opportunities for it. Let it no longer be said of us, that we should be so imprudent as not to be willing to renew our Baptismal Covenant, when our Lord is yet so willing to renew it with us. No longer let it be said of us, that we should be so inconsiderate as to live in the omission and neglect of a duty, which if frequented would convey so many benefits and advantages to us as we have mentioned. O let it no more be said of us, that we should ever hereafter live in the constant neglect of that solemn act of Christian Worship, which if frequently performed, would be so evident a sign of our great love to Religion and Piety, and of our deep apprehensions of another

ther World, and our concernment for a joyful Immortality. Never, never let it be said of us in the day of Judgment, that while we dwelt upon Earth, we were alway loath and backward, and unwilling to present our selves whenever we were invited to that holy and heavenly and pleasant duty, by the frequenting of which, we might so plainly have shewn our greater love to Jesus, by our readiness to take all opportunities of commemorating his dying bleeding affection to us.

And then, O let it never be said of any of us, that the only reason why we should or could be supposed to refuse it, was, because we would not be at the pains of *putting on* the Wedding-Garment, or endure the thoughts and consideration of stripping our selves of the old spotted rayment of Sin and Irreligion! No, the old acquaintance must be parted with, the old *Dalilabs* divorced, the darling Iniquity that has long been near and dear to thee must be thrown off. But may it be henceforth never said of us, that we had rather part from the *sweet Communion* with the holy Jesus, than renounce our *fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*. Why shall any

ny of these things be ever said of any one of us, in the hour of death or day of our Accompts? May they never be said to us, or remembred in that day and hour, when it shall be impossible to reform them!

To conclude this head, O that sometimes we would withdraw our selves from the World, and look beyond the Grave, and then look upon our selves as those that are hastning to Eternity; and then in that serious thought let us consider, that e'r long, we shall find it to have been the best and most satisfactory imployment in the World, to have been frequent and devout Communicants.

O that sometimes we would shut our Eyes, or take them off from the World, and then think how vast that Eternity is, that depends upon the holy management of this moment: and having so done, then tell me, how great the necessity and advantages of this holy Duty do begin to appear.

O that sometimes we would look upon our selves only as Strangers and Pilgrims here, and that two or three ages hence, we shall all be forgotten, & that then nothing shall be remembred of us any more,
but

but either our horrid unreformed Iniquities, or our sincere holiness, and Conformity of heart and life to the Gospel of our Saviour : and then upon such a close and piercing thought as this, instantly consider, how does this holy and heavenly Duty appear to thee ? and wouldst thou not willingly have it then remembered of thee, that thou wert here below a devout frequenter of these holy Mysteries ?

O that Sometimes we could seriously fix our eyes in a holy Meditation on that glorious day, in which our Lord shall come to place his faithful Servants beyond all further doubts or fears, possibility of sin or temptations, infelicities or Scruples of Conscience : Tell me in such a thought as this, would it not be a blessed consideration to be in a State, in which we could be truly able to *love his appearing* ? (2 Tim. 4. 8.) why, never shall it be thus with us, 'till we come to be devout and frequent attenders on these holy Mysteries. Nay, I will appeal to thine own Soul in the Case, when wert thou ever able so heartily and truly to love the thoughts of thy Lord's appearing, as when thou wert but just come from his holy Table ? Couldst thou not have

have been willing then, that all thy business in this World might have been over, and that he might have then come, and taken thee into the air with him, and set thee down in the Mansions of eternal Holyness? and why then should not thy frequency in this holy action be such, as that he may almost even at any time *come*, and not fail to *find thee so doing*?

O that sometime we would look upon this life, as a state and condition in which we are plac't by the eternal God, to fit and trim the Soul, for the society of those holy Worthies that are gon up before us; and then in that thought consider, how far short our practice comes of their daily and weekly communicating: Or, that lastly, we would sometime look back too, and consider again, that among all our former days that are slid away from us, those only shall shortly be remembred with joy, in which we have done something in order to a joyful Resurrection, and a safe Eternity. Say now, would we not in such a thought as this, wish heartily, that we had a better account in the Registers of Heaven than we yet have? more especially that we had many more devout performances of
this

this holy and heavenly duty recorded there than we have? and if we find Reason thus to think of our past dayes, Oh why should we henceforward have reason to think the same of our future days then, when they also shall be over, and we shall be brought to the Neighbourhood of the Grave?

I shall therefore in the name and words of our dear and holy mother the Church, earnestly beseech you no longer to continue so much strangers to, so wilful neglecters of this holy Duty: (*— and if any man neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a Publican. St. Mat. 18. 17.*) and she invites us thus, — “I bid you
“in the name of God, I call you in
“Christ’s behalf, I exhort you as you
“love your own Salvation, that you all
“be partakers of this holy Communion.
“And as the Son of God did vouchsafe
“to yield up his Soul by death upon the
“Crosse for your Salvation, so it is your
“duty to receive the Communion in re-
“membrance of the Sacrifice of his death,
“as he himself hath commanded: Which
“if ye shall neglect to do, consider with
“your selves how great injury you do
“unto God, and how sore punishment
“hangeth

“hangeth over your heads for the same,
“when ye wilfully abstain from the
“Lord’s Table, and seperate from your
“brethren who come to feed on the Ban-
“quet of that most heavenly food. And
thus much of the first general head, to
shew, that this is a necessary holy and
Christian Duty to be frequently per-
formed, and the neglect of it infinitely
dangerous.

CHAP. II.

This do in remembrance of me.

SEcondly, we come now to see to what end it was instituted or appointed by our blessed Saviour.

First, it was instituted and ordained for a perpetual and devout remembrance of him our Redeemer, so says our Lord himself, St. *Luke* 22. 19. *This do in remembrance of me.* —

As if he had said, in remembrance of mine Agony and bloody sweat for your interest; in remembrance of my bitter sufferings and my death; in remembrance of my Laws and Doctrines; in remembrance of my Resurrection and Ascension; in remembrance of my Victory for you, over Sin and Death and Hell; in a comfortable remembrance of this too, that upon your Repentance, Reformation, and Sincere obedience for the future, your past iniquities shall all be placed upon the accompt of the Cross, and

44 *This do in remembrance, &c.* Ch. 2.

and be covered with the Robes of my Righteousness; and that I will ever be your Jesus, your Saviour; Do this, do it for a continual and grateful memorial of these things: that so such a remembrance as this of me your dying Lord, may fill your Souls with Love and Devotion, your Wills with holy resolutions; that so it may excite and stir up holiness and virtue in your lives, and may unite and endear you to your Lord and Saviour, unite and reconcile you to each other, and promote peace and love, and unanimity and Charity among you, who are all members of my body, of that body (the Church) of which I am the head: that so meeting together frequently at this feast of Charity, when you remember my love to you all, this may promote love among you all, and may increase Faith and Piety and obedience in you, and encourage you in it, till at last you come to meet me in my Kingdom. Thus was it first instituted for a thankful remembrance of our Redeemer, and all he has done and suffered for us.

Was it so? and Lord can it ever be, when this was the great intent and design of it, that any that name thy sacred Name,

Ch. 2. *This do in remembrance, &c.* 45

Name, should be unwilling to come and bear a part in such a remembrance? Methinks that Soul that should refuse to do so, refuse to fit and trim it self, to go forth and remember the Lord of Life and Glory, with the rest of his Christian brethren, should upon such a thought, be sorrowful and greatly troubled, that almost all others should go to claim and beg an interest in the death and sufferings of their Lord, and he alone be unconcern'd in it; he alone stay back, and refuse to put his hand to the Petition, and his Seal to the Covenant. Methinks again, such a Soul should consider and say, how imprudent, how inconsiderate is my case and condition, how dangerous is my state of Life, that while others are resolving and preparing to go, and hoping to feast acceptably with Jesus, I should be alone backwards? Here I am, wallowing in Sin, living in a heedless, stupid, careless state of life, following my lusts and vices, and take no care to get out of them, no care for my Salvation, making no provision for Eternity and a joyful Resurrection; but always suffer my self to be hurried away by Iniquity, born down by every slight Temptation, and am kept off from fitting my self

46 *This do in remembrance, &c.* Ch. 2.

self for the Table of my Lord, by vain pretences, and little Excuses, by every Sin that looks fair and offers a little delight or advantage; and shall I live and dye thus? Shall I continue in this State till all opportunities be over and at an end with me? Why, O why should not I, even I also labour to put on the Wedding-Garment, *and see if he will yet be intreated, and reconciled to me, and bless me, even me also?* Rouze then O my Soul, awake and arise speedily from the death of Sin, to the life of Righteousness; off with thy old poluted Garments, (by divine Grace) forever, on with thy better rayment of Faith and Repentance, Piety and Charity; and come my Soul, let us go speedily to remember the love of our dying Lord; for most others, they are either gone, or going; Come my soul, at last let us go willingly and chearfully, others they are hastening, *and methinks the Love of Christ begins to constrain us to,* 2. Cor. 5. 14. Come then let us hasten to commemorate and meet him, with the best preparations we can make; for others they are fitting, trimming and adorning the Soul so to do: and the same Lord is ready with his assisting Grace for me, even for me also, if I am
not

Ch. 2. *This do in remembrance, &c.* 47

not wanting to my self, that is, earnestly beg, and faithfully use and imploy it.

Well then ; my Christian Brethren, all of them they are going, and shall I be the only person that shall stay behind? they are now resolving to celebrate the memory of a bleeding Redeemer, and shall not I also? Oh how will my Lord take this at the day of Judgment? how ill will he take it at my hands, that I alone should stay behind, lurking with his Enemies Sin and Satan, when others throw them off and bid adieu to them, to go to meet and remember Jesus?

May each Soul that is seeking for pre-
tences and has any temptations to absent
himself, thus argue, and thus consider ;
and let him say further, would I be will-
ing to stand among those who have fre-
quently and devoutly remembred the
Lord of Life and Peace, *the Author and
Finisher of our Faith?* (Heb. 12. 2.) Is
not this my desire? is it not my earnest
hope? Come my Soul, say once more,
come, let us stand with them now, let
us stand with them now and ever here-
after, while we stay with them here be-
low, let us be found among them now
employ'd in this heavenly action, among
whom we would willingly be found at
our

48 *This do in remembrance, &c. Ch.2.*

our Lord's Second coming to judge the World. Let us not (my Soul) prefer the pleasures of Sin for a Season, let us not choose the trifling profits and advantages of Sin for a season, but when others go forth to meet the Lord, and commemorate the death and passion of their blest Redeemer, may it never be my lot to be absent, much less may it never be my choice to be so; and when others shall be prostrate before him, and by this heavenly action joyntly renewing their Covenant with him, recounting what he has done and suffered for them, Sending up the Incense of praises and thanksgivings, joyntly Suing out their pardon from the Court of Heaven, with one Soul and heart, sending up holy petitions to him, to be by him presented and handed un to the Father, thus making a joynt provision for a safe and holy Eternity; far be it, O far be it (I say) from me, to refuse to bear a part with them: but with all the devout Souls of the Christian Church, be ever hereafter ready and joyful, and forward and glad of all opportunities to be imployed in the solemn, devout, and holy and thankful remembrance of the Lord that bought me; And That's the first end to which this Sacrament. was appointed.

Secondly,

Ch. 2. *This do in remembrance, &c.* 49

Secondly, it is also a Seal of that Covenant, which God was pleased to make with us by Christ, which we entred into at our Baptism ; that gracious Covenant made between God and us, by the Mediator Jesus. Thus 'tis called, *the blood of the New Testament*, St.

Mat. 26. 28. [*or of the new* ἡ καινῆς διαθήκης.
Covenant. Now this new Co-

venant, between God and us, made by our Saviour, is (as was before said) that God will give pardon of our Sins, sanctifying Grace, and everlasting Glory, upon our Conditions of Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience. Our Lord in those Mysteries, Seals this to us, and assures us, as he is the God of Truth, and cannot lye or deceive us, that he will perform his part ; We on the other hand, seal back this to him, that we will sincerely and heartily endeavour to perform our part : We are then to remember, that thus it was promised for us in our Baptism, when we knew nothing of it; but here we come in our own persons, to take those advantageous Conditions on our selves, to renew them by our own hand, our own act and our own choice.

50 *This do in remembrance, &c.* Ch. 2.

This is my Blood of the new Covenant, says our Saviour ; to this our Lord invites us, to shew first his death till he come, and next, to renew our Covenant with him ; to Seal it again, and to declare our resolutions, to labour more effectually and diligently for the remainder of our dayes to stand to our engagements, and discharge our Conditions of it.

O my Lord, (say now upon this consideration) who am I, that thou shouldst leave thy Fathers bosom, to be the compassionate *Mediator of a new Covenant* between God and me ? but oh who am I, that after so many breaches of it, thou shouldst call and invite me, once more to come, and renew it with thee again ? who am I, that thou shouldst speak to me, to come and enter again into a further confirmation of it ? what a tender mercy is this ? how blest a priviledge is this ? that thou art pleased to call me once more, to come and receive my Pardon, if but yet for the future, I do in an honest sincerity perform my part of the Covenant ? What long-suffering is this, that thou shouldst still bid me to approach, and have my Pardon sealed too ; if my terms be but yet performed ? and
how

Ch. 2. *This do in remembrance, &c.* 51

how far have I been from deserving any thing of this at thy hands?

And O my Jesu, shall I refuse to come, and humbly accept of those mercies which thou art yet pleased to offer me? and though I have broken *my part* of that Covenant which this Sacrament is a seal of, shall I not thankfully come and accept of thy desires to make good *thine*, if after all this I am not yet wanting to my self?

Shall I not rejoyce in an opportunity of confirming and ratifying in my own person, that which was done for me without my knowledge in my Baptism? shall I not come and declare my desires to be found now and ever within the Covenant of Grace? Or shall I voluntarily withdraw my self from it, and not come and put my hand and seal to it, with others of my Christian Brethren? shall I by my refusal to renew it, declare for Sin, for the World, Flesh and Devil? Far be it from me, (say) O my dear Redeemer, far be such thoughts as those, No, I come willingly and readily and chearfully, with a Soul, and Heart, and Mouth, full of Praises and Adorations, to renew this gracious Covenant, to own my self thy Disciple, thy Servant, thy

52 *This do in remembrance, &c* Ch. 3.

follower ; I come to see thy dying bleeding Love, and to imprint it afresh upon my memory : I come to see thy earnest desires of accomplishing my Redemption represented to me ; I come to behold thy Agony and bloody sweat, thy Cross and Passion ; thy Body broken, thy Blood poured out for me : I come freely and openly to own my unworthyness to come at all, to own how undeservingly I have walked of those benefits. I come to sue a Pardon for my breaches of my terms of the new Covenant ; I come to seal it again with thee, and humbly, and thankfully adore thee for this mercy, that thou callest me once more to do so.

O that instead of ever entertaining a thought of absenting our selves, we would imploy it in some such meditati-

ons as these, or with the words following of that excellent person before mentioned ? “ That frequent Commu-
 “ nions are as necessary to our spiritual
 “ growth and increase in holyness, to re-
 “ pair the decays of our Graces, and to
 “ renew our strength and vigour in ser-
 “ ving God, and to procure the pardon of
 “ Sin after a relapse, and to call back the
 “ holy Spirit when he is withdrawn
 “ from

Dr. Sherlock
Relig. Assemb.

Ch.3. *This do in remembrance, &c.* 55

“from us, as bread is to keep our bodies,
“in constant repair; and did men love
“their Souls as they do their bodies
“they would no more neglect the Supper
“of our Lord, than their daily food.
“And if we have been guilty of any
“breach of Covenant with God, by ven-
“turing on the commission of any Sin,
“when we have with tears bewailed our
“Sin and renewed our Repentance, here
“we must renew our Covenant, and by
“approaching the Table of our Lord,
“declare, that though we are Sinners,
“yet we are not Apostates, (that is, we
“are not fallen from the Faith or the
“Christian Religion) but that we still
“own our Covenant; and by the Grace
“of God, which we now implore and
“hope to receive, resolve to continue
“stedfast in it while we live.

CHAP. III.

Of Examination of our Selves.

I Come next in the third place, to shew briefly, how we are to come prepared to this holy Sacrament.

The chief parts of preparation are these.

First, Examination of our selves.

Secondly, To enter then into a holy Course of Life, by Repentance and Resolutions of a future sincere Obedience.

Thirdly, To bring with us a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ.

Fourthly, To bring with us Charity to our Brethren.

Fifthly, To bring with us Devotion and a pious frame of Soul.

Of each of these briefly.

First, of Examination of our selves; to this St. Paul adviseth, — *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that Cup.* 1 Cor. 11. 28.

And

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 55

And here we are to examine (as far as our memory can inform us) what our breaches have been of that Covenant which we entred into with God and our Saviour in Baptism. We told you, that our part of the Covenant is, Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience. But alas ! we have most miserably gon astray, and have often, knowingly, wittingly and willingly broken all these parts of that holy Covenant.

As to our *Faith* first, how dull, lifeless, and unactive has that been ? how little have we shewed it by our works ? by works of Mercy, Piety, Charity, or Devotion ? How little have we shewed our Faith, by our Conformity of heart and life, to those Gospel duties to God, to others, and our selves, by which we should have shewn it ? St. *Ja.* 4. 18.

Again as to *Repentance*, how unsincere has that been ? how have we return'd soon after our beginnings of it, to our old iniquities, *like the Dog to his vomit, or the Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire ?* 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. Can we not easily remember the time, when we had wept over our Crimes, and thought our Repentance had been deep and hearty, that we instantly fell into them again, upon

56 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3.

the next temptation that look't fair? and forgot our holy Resolutions. Whereas a Reformation or change of life, is the life of Repentance, and without that, (at least in the Gospel measures, that is, in the most hearty sincerity, though not entire perfection) what we call Repentance, is *but the bowing down the head like a Bull-rush.*

Then as to that other part of our Covenant, *Obedience*, how unsincere has this been too? how partial have we been in it, performing one duty, and omitting two; reforming one iniquity, and then soon after, entring upon another instead of it? Thus, can we not remember, that we may have changed the Lusts of our Youth, into the Covetousness of old age? the intemperance and vanity of our younger days, into revenge and malice, in our growing years? and so instead of a universal reformation, often exchanging only one sin for another? Then again, how gross has our Ignorance been of our necessary and indispensable duties? and yet of those that we have known, how few have we faithfully discharged? how has the World Flesh and Devil stept in between us and our former resolutions of Obedience? So dismally

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 57
mally have we broken our part of the Co-
venant.

But now does our God and Saviour call us to renew it once more? and will he be reconciled to us yet, if we heartily return and renounce iniquity, and give up our selves to obey his commands? and is he ready to give us an assurance of this, and to confirm it in the holy Sacrament?

Come my Soul, let us examine our selves, and consider what our breaches have been of this gracious Covenant, at least our greater and our more notorious, heynous breaches; that is, what our omissions of our Duties have been; what our known commissions have been, that so we may come to a true *and deep Humiliation* of our selves before God; and being *sensible* of our Crimes, *and heavy Laden*, we may come to Jesus to be *eased* of them; and that so, seeing them, we may loath them; that loathing them, we may remember this when we come to the Table of the Lord: and that we may remember it too, when we are come off from that holy Table, and are going abroad into the World again, and throw them off forever.

58 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3.

That so we may ever remember how dear they cost us, (and if returned to again, are like to cost us dearer) how dear they cost our Jesus, and yet how willing he is to be reconcil'd. And when the Temptation returns again, we may beat it off (by divine aid) with some of these considerations, some of these remembrances, and especially this. That forgiveness belongs not to him, who sins and repents, repents and sins on still; but to him who repents so, as to forsake his Crimes and his Iniquities.

Plainly and in short, the meaning of Examination, is to consider these three things following.

First, To examine whether you rightly understand that Vow and Covenant which you made with God in your Baptism, and which you come to renew and Seal again with God in the Sacrament: If you do not, 'tis (I say it again) briefly this; Almighty God on his part, graciously promises a free pardon of all your past-Sins, Grace here, and Salvation hereafter by Jesus Christ; Upon Condition, that we discharge our part; that is, seriously believe the truth of the Gospel of our Saviour, Truly Repent of all our Sins, and by sincere resolutions and constant

Ch. 3. Of Examination of our, &c. 59

stant endeavours of future Obedience, give up our selves to follow him in Holyness and Righteousness all the dayes of our Lives.

Secondly, To look into the Soul, and as far as our memory will reach, to enquire what our Iniquities, (especially our greater iniquities) have been, with reference to God, Our selves, Or our Neighbours, that we can discover we have adventured upon, either in Thought, Word, or Action.

Thirdly, To enquire, what Omissions of Duties (especially what greater omissions) either to God, our selves, or Neighbours, we can charge upon our selves, either of Thought, Word, or Action.

And when we have so done, to bewail them heartily, (as well as our Secret-Sins, with David *Psf.* 19. 12.) to take new *Resolutions* against them, to go and declare those our holy resolutions at the *Holy Sacrament*, and when that is over, to labour *watchfully and sincerely* to keep those pious Resolutions. This is (in short), the meaning of Examination; as to the particular heads of Examination, and helps to it, I refer you to the *whole Duty of Man.*

But

60 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3.

But then let us Examine not only what our iniquities have been, but also how great they have been; how they have been aggravated or increased in their guilt, or made greater by several wayes and means. For thus, Examine, have not some of them been against *much light, much knowledge*? have we not rusht into them foreseeing them plainly, and done it wittingly and willingly? Examine again, has it not been a Sin or Sins not only of knowledge, but of which we might *easily consider before-hand* the great guilt and dangers? Nay possibly did weigh and consider it, and yet after such consideration have resolved to choose it, for some vain delight or trifling advantage it brought with it.

Examine further, was it not a Sin which when we adventured on, *our own Conscience flew in our face*, and stept in between us and it; and yet we broke through all Resistances and oppositions of Conscience?

Examine again, had not thy Sin this guilt to make it greater, that it has *frequently* been committed? so frequently, that no vows, no former purposes, of amendment or obedience, could restrain thee from it, but didst wilfully break

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 61

break all these, to come to thy crime?

Examine further, it is not grown up to a greater height? has it not this increase of its guilt, that 't'as been so frequently adventured upon, as that it is grown into *a custome, a second Nature with thee*, strongly grafted and deeply rooted in thee?

Examine again, is it not so deeply rooted in thee, that thy *Conscience is even hardened and seared* against it? that afflictions sent from God to reclaim thee, have not wrought upon thee? or it may be 'tis of so Long continuance, that the charitable and private admonitions of thy Friends and the Ambassadors of God, have been in vain with thee; so deeply rooted, that notwithstanding these, the long custom of the Sin, has endeared thee to it, so as to like it in thy self and others too.

Having inquired therefore, what thy iniquities are, examine whether they have not some of these *aggravations* that make them greater and more heynous. If thou findest it so upon enquiry, Oh let the consideration of it, work thee into a *deep sense of, and humiliation* for it, and that humiliation for it, lead thee to *sincere Contrition*, to grief of heart, that thou shouldst
est

62 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3.

est thus have requited the infinite mercies of a tender Father, of a dear Redeemer; and that the good and *holy Spirit* should have been so *grieved* by thee. (*Eph.* 4. 30.) And let the end of all this be, that thou now at last, come to a *hatred and abhorrence* of it, and that thou art now going to Jesus, to take up new Resolutions of Reformation.

Such as this let thy Examination be, look back thus upon thy past dayes, look into the State of thy Soul, search it narrowly, and as strictly as thou canst, and see if there be any one *known wilful Sin* lodging in it; and beg of God to discover it to thee, and then take this opportunity of throwing it off forever. Or, if after a long Custom and habit, it be not to be thrown off all at once, then (at least) begin thy faithful resolutions, and war against it now; never leaving, till by the grace of God (always ready for those that beg and faithfully use it) thou hast obtained the Victory, and subdued it: and here at the Lord's Table, thou wilt get greater strength against it, new Arguments against it: The remembrance of thy dying Saviour's bleeding Love, will assist thee in the conquest of it.

Come

Ch. 3, Of Examination of our, &c. 63

Come then, let us go to our Jesus, and to the Entertainment which he will make for us, and let this *Examination* bring us to a *sense* of our Sins, that the *sense* of them may bring us to a *Humiliation*; and that *humiliation* may bring us to *sincere Contrition*; and that *Contrition* may bring us to *Repentance, Reformation and Holyness*; that so we may come at length to see the Pleasures and Advantages of a Religious and Holy Life, and tast those Sweets and Delicacies, which we yet little think there are in such a state of Life; and that so our past impieties may all be covered with the Robes of our Lord's Righteousness.

But that you may never hereafter be at a loss in your Examination, so as to neglect this Holy and Heavenly Duty, because of endless doubts and fears, whether you are qualified or no, do but try your selves by these following questions. As I was baptized into the Religion of the ever blessed Jesus, so am I willing to stand to these engagements, (to the utmost of my power) that were then made in my name? Do I seriously believe the Gospel to be the Truth of God? and will I labour uprightly to conform my heart and life to it? Do I repent of all
my

64 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3.

my Sins, (known and secret) and my former disobedience? Have I a lively and stedfast Faith in Christ my Saviour? Am I sensible of my unworthyness to come to this Table, and desirous to be made more worthy? that is, am I sensible of my Crimes and Iniquities, and desirous of Pardon, and of Grace to reform? And do I resolve and purpose a sincere reformation of any thing that I can discover in my self at any time, which is contrary to the Will of God? --- Particularly, do I resolve and purpose, to set my self with watchfulness and diligence against that bosom Sin whatever it be, to which I know my self most inclin'd? Do I harbour in my heart no one known wilful Sin at this instant? Do I desire, and heartily endeavour to understand the Gospel of my Saviour, and to direct my Life and Actions, according to the Doctrines there delivered? And wherein I shall at any time hereafter fall, through frailty, infirmity, or unawares; do I resolve, speedily to rise again by Repentance, and by a greater Care and diligence, and watchfulness for the future? Am I in Love and Charity with all men, and willing and ready to do any good action for Friends and Enemies? and do

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 65

I wish and desire their good, of Soul, and Body, Goods and good Name? — Am I desirous to renew this Covenant of mine with God, and to come and thankfully commemorate my Dear Saviour's bleeding, dying Love for me in the Sacrament? To come there to receive fresh tokens of his Love to me, and to beg and receive more of his Grace, to help me to perform these things, and to live a sincerely Holy and a Christian life?

If from a sincere and honest heart, you can answer Yes to these particulars, then lay aside your doubts, away with your fears and scruples; And in the name of God come, and come with joy and comfort, with a thankful, lightfom and chearful heart, to this most holy, and heavenly, and pleasant duty in the World.

And thus much of Examination.

Secondly, the Second part of Preparation is, That upon such Examination, we then enter into a holy Course of life, by resolutions *of a future new obedience*. Let this be the end and intent of Examination of our selves, that so having found what our frequent, too frequent breaches of our Covenant, of the Com-
mands

66 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3

mands of our Saviour have been, we may seasonably, while our day lasts, take up hearty and unfeigned purposes of discharging them uprightly, for the remainder of our days. Thus holy David,

חַשׁ בְּתִי

Accuratum examen institui. Synops.

Psf. 119. 59. I thought on, [or I examined] my wayes, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies. Let our Examination of our ways,

have the same end, the same fruit and effect that his had. Here let us come then, and renew and declare our *Christian Resolutions*, when our Lord calls, and invites us, and is willing to have us do it.

More especially here do thou go to declare and renew them against that *particular Iniquity*, to which (upon thy Examination) thou foundest thy self most frequently tempted: bring with thee an enrire hatred of all, but especially of *that*, which hath ofteneft foyle'd thee heretofore, and got the Victory over thee, and may be most like to return upon thee, and do so again. And as now thou art to come in an hatred of it, so think and consider by what *wayes and means, Companies and Temptations* it may be most like to steal in upon thee again. Consider by what

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 67

what *occasions*, in what *business* or *employment* 'tis, that it may be like to entice thee again, and bear thee down before it ; and that so often, so long, till it may be thou dye in it, and thou lye down in the grave with it, and the holy Jesus come and find it unmortified, and altogether unreformed ; and thou be at his second coming Sentenced for it, to enter into the Lot and portion of the damned.

Having in these thy holy resolutions considered the occasions of it, or by what *delights* or *profits* and *advantages* it usually tempts thee, and prevails over thee, labour then, (how dear soever it cost thee) to get out of the snare and the temptation ; resolve, whatever mortifications, self-denials or disadvantages in thy Worldly affairs it stand thee, to get out of the way of it. In the first place, labour now then, to foresee what the occasion of it may be, by which wayes the temptation enters upon thee ; by what Companies, (I say) business, Employments ; for the Love of what pleasures, advantages and interests thou art led to it ; that so foreseeing them, thou mayest *abstain from all appearance of evil.* 1 *Thes.* 5. 22.

Resolve

68 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3.

Resolve hence-forward, to step out of the way of these occasions, whatever shame or reproach it may cost thee from man; that so thou mayest follow Jesus uprightly and chearfully, and ever hereafter, be a ready, willing, joyful and prepared Communicant. And when thou hast found out the occasions of it, whatever they were, Consider, and say, And is this that petty Interest, or that vain delight, that comes to rob me of my Soul? my Heaven, and my Immortality? And is this all that it can ever give or promise me in exchange of them? Is this all I shall get by my Compliance with them whenever they come again? And shall I do so any more? shall I embrace their motions any more? No, on my Soul, on, and as thou art going; look back no more, faint no more, give out no more; thou knowest the utmost of those Pleasures or Profits, they can bring thee in, but thou knowest little, or not half of those vast felicities and joyes that await thee in the place of Glory; On therefore my Soul, and be content to stay for thy Delights and advantages, till but after the death of one Life, (and that's no longer than thou wouldst be content to stay for the Reversion of a
large

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 69

large Estate) and then sit down in the full Enjoyment of them to all ages, and thou shalt be at rest forever, at peace forever, happy and holy and safe for ever. And thus, let us enter upon a holy course of life, *by resolutions of a future sincere obedience, and by actually putting off all known Sin whatsoever.* And that's the second thing as to Preparation.

Thirdly, let us bring with us a *lively Faith, in God's mercy through Christ.* That is, stedfastly believing, that for his sake, our offended Father will be reconciled to us, if with Repentance and such Resolutions of a sincere obedience to his Commands, and a future Reformation, we give up our selves to him.

And not doubting of this, let us consider and say; who am I, that after so many acts of wilful disobedience, so many habitual Impieties, so many known neglects of my holy Duties, there should, upon my sincere Reformation and new Life, be any arms yet open to receive me? What, are there any possibilities for me of being yet accepted upon my hearty returning? Can these arms that were once stretcht out upon the Cross, and nail'd to it, be spread still to embrace me, upon my becoming a new Crea-

70 *Of Examination of our, &c. Ch. 3.*

Creature? me, who have as it were trampled upon the blood of the Covenant? Are there hopeful possibilities yet left, of my receiving infinite benefit by that blood, if I am willing to have the merits of it applyed to me, and fit my self to have them so applyed? And may I yet be accepted to eternal ages, if I go in the name of Jesus, with a faithful penitent Conversion to my offended Father? Why then, with the Prodigal, *I will arise and go to my Father*; and if he should have Compassion upon me, should I not rejoyce that ever I went to him, and bid adieu to my impious Courses? I will then arise and go to him, *and say, Father, I have Sinned.* And if I resolve thus to go to him, I have one to go with me, and intercede for me too; One that can produce and shew to my Father the price of my Redemption: One, who (if I thus penitently go) will stand between me and my Father's Wrath, between me and the sorrows of Eternity. One, that can shew Blood and Wounds to plead for me to my offended Father. One, who, if we are truly desirous to wash our Sins in penitential tears and yet cannot, can represent to my Father, that he wept blood for me; and 'tis one, in whom
our

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our,* &c. 71

our Father is well pleased : One, that can prevail, and do any thing with this our Father. And because we cannot hope that he will be reconciled to us, but by the merits and mediation of this our Redeemer, let us go to him first, and beseech him to intercede for us.

But where shall we go to find and meet him? why, at his holy Table he will not fail to meet us, if we go thither faithfully, penitently, charitably, and devoutly; there'tis he often calls and invites us to meet him, and expects and stays for us there; ready (if we come thus qualify'd) to go with us to him.

O my Soul (say) Come let us go to this our Jesus then, Let us go and Sup with him, and humbly tell him how the Case stands with us, how disobedient we have been; and how heartily earnest we are to return and be accepted. And having his Son our friend and Advocate, Let us not fear to say to him, with an awful humility. *Father I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee;* But oh my Father, look upon thy Son, and my Jesus.

I can only confess, and sorrow, and sue for pardon, but he has atton'd for me too, Let his wounds plead for me.

See

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See (O my Father) that side the spear pierc't for me, and there *made way for me to his very Heart.* Look on those Sacred hands that were nailed to the Wood; See there how the pointed Iron drew for me in his hand the line of Life, the line of Life Eternal. Let his bleeding palms be an Expiation for mine, that have been so often *lifted up to smite my brother,* so seldom raised in my Devotions. Let those Feet, the nail also bored, be an Expiation for mine, that have been swift to shed blood; or slow *to run the way of thy Commandments.* Thus O Father, tho I have sinned, he has suffered, and atton'd; though I have *sinned against Heaven,* he is there to plead and mediate for me; his merits are infinitely more than my Impieties.

And when thou hast thus in the Name of Jesus, humbly sought the favour of thy offended Father, would it not be matter of infinite Joy to think the Redeemer of the World should intercede for thee, and say Behold O my Father, a penitent, a true and contrite penitent, one that with the Prodigal had estrayed from thee, but he is returning, and he sorrows not only for fear of Hell and punishment, but he grieves for having offended a
tender

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 73

tender and compassionate Father. The consideration of his very ingratitude melts him into tears, and his Contrition also has wrought in him sincere resolution of amendment of life. Behold O my Father, to such contrite penitents are my merits to be applyed, to such hast thou promised mercy; Let all his past Iniquities therefore be charged upon my account.

Say now, would not this be a blessed consideration, to have the Saviour of the World thus pleading and prevailing for thee with thy offended Father?

Why then go to him, but so qualified as we have mentioned, and he will be heard in thy behalf; for thy Father is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. *Joel. 2. 13.* And that's the third part of a Preparation.

Fourthly, We are to bring with us universal Love and Charity to our Brethren. To come with a readiness and willingness to be reconciled to them who have injured us; and if we have done the wrong, to be ready, and actually to endeavour, to reconcile them to us; according to that of St. *Matth. chap. 5. v. 23. 24. If thou bringest thy gift to the Altar, and there rememberest that thy Bro-*

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74 *Of Examination of our, &c. Ch. 3.*

ther hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

But to insist on this the more briefly, clearly and distinctly, we are to consider, that the Charity we are to bring with us, consists, first in Forgiving, second in Giving.

Now as to the first of these, the two great and usual Miscarriages in our practice, are first *our Loathness* and backwardness to *forgive*. Secondly our great *unwillingness* when we have done a known injury, to *go and seek a reconciliation*, and to desire to be at peace with him that we have injur'd.

We are loath in the first place to *forgive*; It may be we have listened to a Tale-bearer, and we have been told an idle story, and such a one has spoken ill of us, or railed on us; Instantly we swell, and are all in a flame, and can think of nothing but revenge and malice, and a perpetual hatred, and it may be nothing but his blood will satisfy our revengeful humour; and bitterly say presently, *We will be even with him again.*

But

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But is this the patience, and meekness, and self-denial of the Gospel? Is this the forbearing, *forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any one, as Christ forgave us?* Col. 3. 13. Is this to love Enemies, and to bless them that curse us? *Matth. 5. 34.* Is this our best imitation of the Example of our great Master Jesus? But let us not always so learn Christ, but endeavour to bring the Soul to that mortified, calm, and peaceful temper, as to be ready to forgive injuries, and to bear them meekly, sweetly and temperately; and when the Tale-bearer shall come to thee, and tell thee, that such a one has reproacht thee; Consider, possibly it may not be true, and then thou art angry with him without a cause. Consider again, it may be it was in a very great Passion, and by this time he may be sorry for it. However labour to bring the Soul to that Christian pitch and disposition as to be able to say. *Has he spoken this of me? God forgive him for it; or to*

Si probra nobis bene oleant, & verbera Impacta malis naribusq; rideant, ut vix modesto diffidentes gaudio Reddamus alto gratias Altas Deo, Ac Improbanti lene pacis osculum, Hec solidæ tandem est hilaritas frater Leo, Inambulantum Regia in Crucis via, Angel. Gaz.

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say to the bearer *Remember me to him, and tell him I heartily forgive him, and shall be ready to do him any office of Christian Love, whatever he sayes of me.* This would discourage the Tale-Bearer, and heap Coals of fire on the head of the injurious Person, Rom. 12. 20. Coals of fire, not to burn or inflame him, but to melt him into Love, or into sorrow for the injury. This would be an excellent imitation of that great Lord of ours, who prayed for his persecutors, and laid down his life for his Enemies.

At least Consider this, who would lose the benefits and advantages, the joy and the Comfort, and Satisfaction of being a Holy Communicant, only for the small and unchristian pleasure of a revengeful Word, a revengeful look, or a revengeful action? Or consider how much easier is it to forgive an injurious, spiteful word or action, than to lye under the wrath of God to eternal Ages?

Alway too, let us take this for an Eternal Rule, that if we Copy out the Example of Christ, in forgiving, whatever the reproach be, God will force *Light* out of *Darkness*, bring *Glory* out of that which was intended for our *Shame*; and clear up our Innocence, if in
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Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 77

an humble holy and patient Life, we be content to trust him with it.

Secondly, The second miscarriage in this part of Charity is, our great *unwillingness*, when we have done a known injury, to go to the person, *and seek and desire a reconciliation* with him. This I confess is a thing so much a stranger to the World, that few look on it as a Duty: But when our dear Redeemer has commanded it, why cannot we deny ourselves so far as to be content (I say for a known injury) to go to him, and offer to be reconciled? Oh no! the World will call us fools, and whatever becomes of it, our proud necks will never submit to this part of the Christian yoke: But consider, we renounced the World in our Baptism, and shall we then suffer it to rob us of our Innocence and Duty? Let the World account it so, Remember, our Lord sees not as the World sees, nor judges as the World judges. Again, if we be ill spoken of for a Christian Duty, that is, for Righteousness sake, great then is our reward in Heaven. And let us be content to stay for it, till we shall receive it there. Again, let us not listen to the voice of an irreligious World in matters

St. Matth.
5. 11. 12.

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of Religion ; but above all, let us consider, our Lord has gone in the high way of the Cross before us, he endured it, and despised the shame. O let us more readily do so too, in this case, Looking unto Jesus. *Hebr. 12. 1. 2.* Let us remember too, That Christ is come to mortifie our carnal tempers, and to teach us self-denial, and to bear the Cross ; and what an excellent instance, would this readyness to go and desire ; and offer to be reconciled to those whom we have knowingly injured, be of our desires to imitate our Saviour ? and if we were revild and laught at, to say with the Martyr of old, *Nunc incipio esse Christianus.* Now I begin to be a Christian, and to be likened to my Saviour. To conclude this point, how much easier is it to desire to be reconciled, to acknowledge our fault, and ask a forgiveness when we know we have injured, than to bear the terrors of Eternity ? and 'tis a deplorable consideration to think, that we can deny our selves nothing, bear nothing, do nothing, though a little against the grain, against flesh and blood, for the sake of Immortality, for the pleasures of the holy Sacrament, and the Love of Jesus.

Secondly,

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Secondly, The second part of Charity consists in *Giving*. Alms and Oblations have in all ages of the Church, accompanied the feast of Charity; and with great reason is it, that in this Solemn act of Christian worship, we should humbly offer some part of our possessions to God, as a token of this, that we thankfully own, we hold all we have from him, and therefore desire to pay back something again to him; that is, to those whom he has made his Receivers: and the usual miscarriages in this case, are two likewise, either first, we come to this feast of Charity, *without setting apart any thing* for the needs of our poor brethren, or else secondly we bring *too little*.

As to the first of these, Consider, when we relieve any at our doors, that's (often) because of their importunity with us, or it may be to be rid of them; when we relieve by a Rate, that's by constraint, and the Laws compel us: But this is a free-Will-offering. Never let us fail therefore, when we come to see fresh tokens of our Saviour's Love to us, *who for our sakes became poor.* 1 Cor. 8. 9. then, to set apart some evidence of our Charity to those who bear his Image, and whom he has made his proxies, and that

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our Lord takes it as done to himself; and that for an Alms, we may receive a blessing. Never therefore in this Heavenly action, let us appear before the Lord empty.

But secondly the other fault is, that our alms are often too *thin and slender*. 'Tis true indeed the holy Scripture has not set down the exact measure or rule of giving; but therefore, even for that very reason, we should do well to give even beyond our ability, rather than fall short of it, that being the course that is most safe and most holy, considering, *that he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* 2 Cor. 9. 6. and ever remem-

Bishop of Down
and Conner.

bring that 'tis the observation somewhere of a pious Prelate, (now, through Christ, reaping some of the fruits of his unknown Charity and Piety) That the business of the great day of Judgment shall be transacted, and the Sentence chiefly pass, according to the measure of our works of Mercy and Charity, as he infers from St. *Mat:h.* 25. 31. to the end.

'Twere

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 81

'Twere easie to produce admirable instances of the vast Charity of the Christians of old, such as to this age might seem almost incredible, for as a learned Person observes of them,

"They looked upon the

Dr. Cave Primitive Christ.

"Poor as the Treasure and

"ornament of the Church, by whom

"as by bills of Exchange, they re-

"turned their Estates into the other

"World.

Let me therefore offer you this one Consideration, to be seriously laid to heart, in your next sober and retired thoughts, would we be but content to cut off from our *vain Expences, needless visits, our Excess and extravagancy, our vanity or folly, or what we may lay out on, either Lust or Intemperance, or in prosecuting our brother, in a revengeful malicious and contentious Law-Suit, or the like;* we might have a good portion for the Poor, and opportunity for many more charitable actions, than are yet recorded above; and might have a large *Treasure laid up in Heaven*, at the end of *or Sixty or Seventy Years*, yet never the worse in our Estates, at the end of the year, or the end of our dayes; besides the promise of a blessing here and hereafter,

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from the Eternal God, who has past his word to us. And why then can we not secretly lay out that on our Kingdom, on our Eternal Inheritance in Reversion, which would else be expended on our jollity and excess, in vain and useles Expences?

Further, he that has injured his brother by fraud or deceit, or any other injustice, is in Conscience absolutely bound to restore, or make restitution to him again; but in case he be deceased, we are then to make it to his Heirs or Executors. But possibly it may so happen, that we may have been unjust to some, or in such wayes, that we cannot possibly know who they are; In this Case, the Restitution is to be made to the Poor. Now consider, what an excellent opportunity we have of so doing, by our Alms at this holy Sacrament; always remembering, that the Restitution be rather beyond the injustice done, than in the least degree to come short of it. And that's the fourth part of Preparation.

Fifthly, we are then to bring with us a great Devotion, and pious frame of Soul.

Let us be very careful to lay aside all thoughts and considerations of this lower
World,

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World, and all things else that may clog and hinder the Soul from being then wrought up to a *Sprightly, Holy, Heavenly and Devotional temper*; and earnestly beg of God by prayer to assist us in our cloathing our selves in the Wedding Garment, that so we may go to meet our Saviour acceptably and chearfully, as we would to meet the dearest Friend on Earth, whom we had not seen in many years before.

And having with us a deep *sense and sight of our Iniquities*, begot in us by *Examination*, and a *lively Faith* in the infinite mercies of our God, through our Saviour, having our *Charity truly Christian*, and our *Devotion high and Angelical*, let us with joy and pleasure go to Jesus, and declare our *resolutions* to be his unfeigned and faithful Servants and followers; utterly abhorring all known Sin, and sincerely resolving for all known duty.

And let us say of our old Iniquities, Be content to lay down your Necks, quietly, and submit to be thrown off, for I am going to renew my Covenant with my dear Redeemer. Be content, ye my old Debaucheries, Prophanesses, Lusts and Intemperance, Oaths and Blasphemies, Malice.

84 *Of Examination of our, &c. Ch. 3.*

Malice and Injustice, and the rest of you, to part from me, who am resolv'd to take my leave of you, and to go and be more closely united to the Holy Jesus, and to go on in my journey to the new Jerusalem; adieu to you all, and though we weep at parting, 'tis not because I must leave you, but because I have been too long with you, and had not done so sooner.

And now my Soul, (may the devout person say) seeing we have done with them, let us raise and exalt our affections, for our Lord is coming; and he is coming (if yet we are not wanting to our selves) to bring us a pardon sealed with him from God, and to re-establish our title to a glorious Inheritance: and we shall shortly bless the day, that ever we were perswaded thus to do.

Stay, methinks we begin to feel something of the pleasures of Religion already, something of satisfaction in our very first resolutions of holyness; Oh what will it then be, when we are better acquainted with our blessed Saviour, and his holy and Heavenly Doctrine! what will it be when we come to his Table, and have long frequented it, and given up our selves, intirely to him, as we now
hope

Ch. 3. *Of Examination of our, &c.* 85
hope to do? Come then let us begin it now.

And oh my Soul, could we but for a while steal out of the body, that we might be the more free and lively, and active and unwearied, in our thanksgivings, praises and Hosanna's to that Lord whom we are going to meet.

But however, Let us now say, *I believe, Lord help my unbelief*, for I come to have my Faith strengthened: I am grieved and wearied with the burthen of my Sins, but I come from them to thy arms, the Sanctuary of rest and peace, where wearied Souls alone can lay their Heads, and bring their Cares and Sorrows, to be eased of them, and to have them turn'd into Peace and Pleasure. Thou (Lord) art he whom my Soul loves, and suffer me to say with thy Servant St. Peter, ———
Lord thou knowest that I love thee. And whatever thou please to deny me here, deny me not thy Grace and Aid, to cloath me in that Wedding-Garment which thou will please to accept.

And may the pious Soul further say, Away away from me, all my lesser Concerns of this life, that are apt to draw aside my thoughts from Holyness; Trouble me not now, when I am about to sup
with

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with Jesus : and come and welcom to me all holy thoughts, holy desires, and holy Resolutions ; for you my heart is open at the welcom news of going to feast my Soul with the Body and Bloud of the Saviour of the World.

And be entreated Lord, to come and fill my heart, and take up thy dwelling there, and turn out thence every thought, and desire, and inclination whatever it be, which thou art not willing should dwell with thee. Be entreated Lord, to possess thy self wholly of it ; for I am coming to offer it up and present it to thee. And I am loath, when thou shalt come to take possession, that thou shouldst find any thing there, but holy desires, divine breathings, earnest longings after thee, pantings after Immortality, holy hopes, and devout affections. Fill it O my Jesu, fill it up with those for me, who am coming to meet thy glorions Majesty, by the nearest approaches I can make to thee on Earth ; that So I may never miss of thee at thy Table, or ever go away without a blessing ; and when I shall go forth into the necessary concerns of this present life again, ever let me keep such a flame alive in me, that so the old Enemies may no more be lodged there,

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there, or the old temptations prevail with me; but that alwayes hereafter, when they shall come and seek to be entertained again in my heart or affections, I may have this answer ready for them, *Away from me, Jesus has taken possession there already; Trouble me no more, the room is full, and the door is fast shut, to keep him there, and you from thence.*

With these, or some such meditations as these, let us raise our Devotions then, and stir up our affections, which in this, are like other Flames, the more they are moved and stirred, they appear the more bright and shining.

Or let the pious heart, again say, Oh my Saviour, thou hast touched me with secret but strong inclinations, to be with thee at thy Table, and to take henceforward, all opportunities of so doing; O make them greater than yet they are, and may they never cease to be growing, till I come to meet thee in thy Kingdom. O that thou wouldest but look upon this heart of mine that pants after thee, as a heart fit to be wrought upon by thee, to be made to do so, infinitely more than it does! That it may never more be contented to take fewer opportunities to commemorate the Death and
love

88 *Of Examination of our, &c.* Ch. 3.

love of a crucified Lord, than all that it can possibly have : and when the day of my communicating is over, that I may mourn, and sigh and long for the return of it again. O let the time come, when my Soul shall be wrought up to this pitch and temper never to be so well at ease, or so full of joy as when it has lately come from, or is shortly to go to a holy Communion. 'Tis true, O my Redeemer, and 'tis a sad trueth, I have long carried a World of unholy desires and sensual inclinations about with me, and they have long followed me, and made my love to this Sacrament but dull and little ; But I now hope they are all going off from me, to make way for that and thee. I have long fancied, I might have found happiness in some things of this World, but I now begin to be perswaded and to find, it is only to be found with thee and thy Religion.

I can easily remember, when I have been greatly troubled at small disappointments of this lower World, but never at my disappointing my self of this holy and Heavenly feast, and can likewise as easily call to mind when I have longed for, and been pleas'd in vanity and folly, much more than for a holy Sacrament ;

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ment ; but 'tis some comfort to me, that at last I can feel the thoughts of it to begin to appear pleasing and joyous, and that those old Clouds of Darknes begin to be scattered : and let those flames of love to thee, never go out again, never more return to coldness and ashes ; and may I ever be much more afraid lest they should do so, than at all the troubles, and all the disappointments, and all the reproaches of this World : May I but live and dye with those, and then let all other things be as thou pleasest.

And now O my Redeemer, come and take possession of my heart while 'tis thus warm with the Love and desires of thee, while by it's pantings and divine breathings 'tis moving towards thee, and stands open for thee. May my eager pursuits of either *Riches, Honours, or Pleasures* of this life, never more shut thee out thence, but be thou pleas'd to rest there, *'till I shall be caught up in the Clouds to meet thee in the Air.* 1 Thess. 4. 17. and be ever with thee. As this of all things is now my earnest desire, so may it ever be, 'till that glorious day : and then all my doubts and fears shall be over and at an end, all my temptations and inclinations to Sin, and my frailties and infirmities

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ties shall be cured; all my scruples of
Conscience, my tremblings, and my fears
to displease thee shall be ended, and be
to me as if they had never been at all.
But before that time come, suffer me O
my Lord, to sigh out my desires to be al-
ways with thee, as near as I am able to
be, on Earth, at this distance from
thee.

And O my Soul, shall we begin then to
take this Heavenly course now at the ho-
ly Sacrament? We will, by Divine aid.
On then, our Lord invites us, and calls,
*Come unto me, all ye that are weary and hea-
vy laden, and I will give you rest.* St. Matt.
11. 28. And seeing all things are ready,
and he expects us, let us say to him, *we
come to do thy will*, we are weary and hea-
vy laden, we come to find rest and ease,
we come Lord Jesu, we come quickly.
With these, or some such meditation,
let us then scrue up the Soul to a devout
frame and temper. And thus much of
Preparation.

C H A P. I V.

Considerations after Receiving.

Fourthly, *what is fit to be considered and done after Receiving.*

First, thankfully meditate on the infinite mercy and long-suffering of God, that he has been pleased to give thee this one opportunity more, of renewing and sealing again the Covenant of Grace, who hast so often broken thy Conditions of it.

Secondly, labour to imprint a deep remembrance of any promises or holy resolutions there made, between God and thy Soul, and be watchful in the keeping of them.

Thirdly, earnestly beg of God, to assist thee in the keeping them, and in the walking for the future in the wayes of Religion and Holyness.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, meditate on the danger and the guilt thou runnest into, if thou labour not more sincerely afterward to keep those thy pious purposes, and thy felicity if thou do.

Fifthly and Lastly, by looking back on this divine and heavenly, and pleasant duty, think and meditate, how lovely and chearful and pleasurable, a Religious life must needs be.

First, *thankfully meditate on the infinite mercy and long suffering of God, that he has been pleased to give thee this one opportunity more of renewing and sealing again the Covenant of Grace, who hast so often broken thy Conditions of it.*

Upon this Consideration, who is there but must needs say with David, *Pf. 34. 8. O taste and see that the Lord is good.* We that have lately tasted, and have seen how good the Lord is, how gracious, to have given us one opportunity more of renewing our Covenant with him; shall we, can we forbear to publish it? Can we ever cease to be thankful? No surely, rather let us be ready to encourage others ever hereafter, to go from whence we have come, and taste and see how good the Lord is.

However

However, let each particular Soul, be deeply sensible, and considerate of this goodness of the Lord which he hath tasted; O my Soul, (say) has our Jesus admitted us once more to his Table, and permitted us to seal our Covenant again, to renew our resolutions and purposes of obedience? and would he do it after so many old breaches of it? and is he willing yet to be reconciled, upon our reformation, and future sincerity in Holiness? and has he confirmed this to us in the Sacrament? O infinite Mercy and Compassion of our God! Well, my Soul, let us never forget it, but say with David, *Psf. 103. 1. 2. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name: Bless the Lord O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits.* Let us consider a little, might not God have snatcht away, and have called us presently before him, in the midst of such or such a crying Sin, which we can easily remember, and not have given us one call more, one opportunity more of a reconciliation? he might very justly. Might he not have call'd us to our particular judgment in the midst, in the very act of such or such an Impiety, of this or that Lust or Intemperance injustice or perjury, Oath or Execration,

Execration, Debauchery or uncharitableness? Might he not have done so, *after our long and wilful neglects of this holy Duty*, before ever we approacht to it? and how might it have been now with us, had he taken that advantage against us? Might he not have hurried us away, to eternal unknown woes, without giving us these advantages, which we now by his Grace may improve to the purposes of a blest Eternity? And shall we not, my Soul, shall we not improve them, to the uses of Immortality, when our Lord is thus willing we should? Let us do so then, and do it heartily, chearfully and constantly; and let this goodness of the Lord lead us to Repentance and Reformation, and invite us to holyness and Religion, that's the first.

Secondly, *After receiving, labour to imprint a deep remembrance of thy Promises or holy resolutions then made (or before) between God and thy Soul, and be diligent in keeping of them.* O let not the old Love, the former affection to Iniquity, return any more; but if the temptation do return, stay and remember, how odious, how deformed and ugly the Sin appeared then to thee, when thou wert at the Lord's Table, and then it was, that it appeared

appeared most truly as it is : and then next, let this engage thee to recal thy pious purposes there ; for alas ! these are not to abide with thee only for an hour or a day or a week, but to the end of our dayes : and how hypocritically should we deal with our God, should we instantly forget that we have renewed our Covenant, and our purposes of obedience with him , upon the Alarum of a Sin that promises much, and shows fair.

However, Consider before-hand, the temptation will come again, whatever thy resolutions now are, (and do thou expect no other) and 'tis likely thou wilt not always be in this temper of Soul that thou now art in. The opportunities for thy Sin will be fair again ; but dost not thou now resolve against it ? I suppose thou dost : But alas ! this thou hast done heretofore, (perhaps often also) and promised universal obedience to this Saviour ; and yet hast fallen again, as surely as a man falls that is struck with a Thunderbolt ; and thus it may be thou hast gone round all the dayes of thy Life, Sin'd and repented , received the holy Supper , and yet still fallen as frequently and as surely as ever , and hitherto

therto remain'd in a State of Sin and Death.

Thus I say, it may be, thou hast run on in this Course many years, and doubled thy guilt with thy dayes, and always upon the next occasion and opportunity, forgotten that ever thou didst repent and resolve amendment of life. Remember, this is a very ill sign (yet) of thy Condition, and it is extreemly dangerous. Much (perhaps) above half thy days have gon round in this Circle; And now if thou wouldest, thou hast not half of them left to dedicate to Religion, and the service of the holy Jesus, and to the blessed Severities of Piety and virtue. And what's now to be done then? O at last (now) be more strictly watchful and diligent, in keeping thy Resolutions against it; and against all occasions of it also, whatever *self denial*, or shame or *reproach* or *difficulty* it cost thee: Get at least som tolerable ground against it now, never leaving, till thou hast crucified and subdued all known habituall wilful sin whatever, and laid it dead at thy feet.

Remember too, that now is thy time, that now thou hast yet fair advantages; but if thou imploy them not to the uses of Eternity, and in order to the conquest
and

and victory over thy darling Sin that has so often born thee down before it, thy Lord may e're long, bid thee lay aside all thy business here, and come and appear before him, and find it uncrucified, unreformed, and unmortified in thee.

Consider further, if so, why when thou art laid on the borders of the Grave, and coming to the Neighbourhood of Death, thou wilt then with sorrow perceive and find, that by that hour all thy pains about it would have been over, and all thy trouble at an end; and would have been as if they had never been; and nothing left to do, but to sit down in eternal peace; all thy combats would then have been ended, all thy mortifications over, every difficulty of thy journey past through, and thou wouldest have had nothing more to come, but only (through thy Lord's merits) to sit down and to enjoy the fruit of thy diligence, and thy Victory, in Rest and Holiness, and joy and safety.

Come then in view of these hopes, consider once more, that after all that thou hast done, the old temptation will return upon thee, and what art thou resolv'd to do if it should? wouldest thou without any resistance of it *submit*, and *tamely*
F *yield*

yield to it again? Dost thou not resolve with sincerity of endeavours to get some ground of it, if not the victory? art thou fully purposed to oppose and resist it? If not, to what end hast thou begun thy holy Course of life, if thou intend only to go on in it so long till thou findest a fair opportunity to do otherwise.

If this be thy Case, if thou wilt run thy race no longer than thou canst do it with ease, or no longer than thy Corrupt Interests or desires, or the Devil are quiet, and forbear to tempt thee; thou art then as surely gone as ever.

Consider therefore, now while they are at rest, before they come to be importunate and earnest with thee again, (for they certainly will) how thou mayst best resist them, or be out of the way and most secure from them, from all appearance, all occasions of them, out of their reach and violence. Whatever your Iniquity be, try whether there be not an absolute necessity before it be subdued, and thy resolutions kept, to mortifie thy great desires of the *Riches, Honours, and Pleasures* of the World. Do but try for a while, how safe thou wouldst be then, how much further from all danger of a relaps: and be sure of this also, that
whenever

whenever it returns, it will (like other Enemies) fall upon thee there, where thou art weakest and least fortified.

Whatever therefore thy sinful inclinations be, O double thy guards there, that the Enemies of thy Soul and of thy crucified Lord, may never more find thee unarmed and unprovided, at their next return upon thee.

Further, if thou hopest to keep thy holy Resolutions against all known Sin, then beware, lest thy affections to it, should not be left as dead, as thou art apt to think: Take heed that they revive no more. The least *indulgence*, or *affection* left behind, may renew insensibly, and grow great, and become big enough to bear thee down against thy present holy purposes, and become strong enough to break down all the bonds of Reason and Religion; and then all thy Labour may prove to be lost, thy guilt greater, and thy time less: So great are the least remains of affection left for the old Iniquity. O be then at least more mindful of thy promises of obedience, than hitherto thou hast been. Remember, that now thou hast begun for Heaven, and set out for the Land of *Canaan*, and undertaken, sincerely to be for all that's holy just and

good ; and that now thou mayst be safe for ever, holy and happy for ever, if prudently and with an upright heart, thou carry on the concerns of thy Soul, with those of thy allowable Calling, and to make them equally keep pace together, as thou art peacefully moving toward thy Prize and thy Crown : And as thou art thus going on chearfully to health and peace and pleasure, look behind thee as little as thou canst, lest thy foot slip again, and thou lose thy ground , and thy last state be worse than the first.

Whenever therefore the old allurements, the old occasions, and the former temptations shall return, or the Flesh the World or the Devil, be strongly drawing thee off, and pressing thee to fall as grossly as ever, then (if possible) recalling thy pious resolutions, producing and laying them before thee, say, O my Soul, shall we now break them again ? if we do, we know not, we are not sure, that God will ever give us one advantage or opportunity more of a Reconciliation.

Now then is our time, of resisting the Enemies of our Saviour and our Soul, and of showing what we can do for God and for Religion ; for Heaven and Immortality.

mortality. Now, when our Enemies are most earnest, busie and importunate with us; let us now (seeing this is our time of tryal) gather up all our strength, manage the Combat with Courage, and a great and fixt Resolution, and whatever the pleasure, whatever the advantage or Interest or Honour be, let us look on them all, as the flatteries of our Enemies, and be deaf to them all: and then (by Divine aid and assistance) We shall prevail, *and be more than Conquerors.* Rom. 8. 37.

And O my Soul, let it never be said or remembred of us, in the day of judgement, that we begun well very often, but persevered not; went not on with alacrity and chearfulness, with Zeal and Courage in our pious Resolutions. Never then let it be said, that we forgot thee O Jesu! forgot our League of Friendship, our Covenant with thee, as soon as ever we came from Feasting with thee.

Should our Prince, whom we had highly provoked and injured by treasonable words and actions, invite us to his House, bid us come and dine with him at his own Table, should he tell us he were willing to pardon us; willing to be reconcil'd

to us; notwithstanding all the affronts and injuries he had offered him, willing to receive us into his embraces too, and to be (as we say) friends again, and take us to his favour; should we not thankfully accept of the kindness? and be proud of the favour? Would it not melt us into Love and Affection, joy and gratitude? and upon this should we promise him sincerely to endeavour no more to partake with his Enemies, or to be lead by them to affront or displease him; should we, or could we indeed, as soon as ever we were gone out of his house presently run to his Enemies and joyn with them, and fall to injuring him again as bad as ever, or perhaps worse than ever? How disingenuous, how provoking must it needs be to him? If so, far be it from us my Soul, thus to deal with the King of Kings, and Prince of Peace, the Saviour of the World, and our dear Redeemer.

But now when we go forth from his House, the House of Prayer, and are to apply our selves to the lawful Concernments and occasions of this life, let us carry with us a faithful and constant remembrance of our holy purposes; and let this be one of our pious Resolutions, no more
to

to be ever unmindful of the *rest* of our good resolutions which we made with God at the Holy Table.

Thirdly, *Earnestly beg of God to assist thee in keeping any good Resolutions, and in walking for the future in the ways of Religion and Holyness.* Our pious purposes, desires, or intentions cannot be effected by our selves alone, without the preventing and assisting Grace of our Great Creator and Redeemer. Let us not fail then, frequently and earnestly to sue for it at the Throne of Grace; and then if we are not wanting to our own Interest, but with diligence and sincerity, and watchfulness and honest endeavours, we set our selves to the performance of them, the day will e're long be ours, the Victory and the Crown ours.

Say then, who would be so imprudent, as not earnestly to sue for that which, he may certainly have for the asking and the using? and who would not diligently use and husband it, when the so doing will not fail to procure more? and then again, who would not industriously imploy that *More*, when (like Interest upon Interest) it would bring in more yet? *St. Mat. 13. 12. and 25. 29. St. Lu. 8. 18. and 19. 26.*

○ let not the Grace of God be in vain, and lost on us, only for want of our own Diligence in imploying and using it: and then let not our own watchfulness and labours and pious endeavours be all in vain, only for want of suing for the assistance of divine grace, frequently and devoutly beg of God therefore, to aid thee in all thy *holy purposes and desires and Resolutions*; that he will please to keep thee constant to them, as thou art passing over this World, to him, and to a better; that he would increase the hatred of thy Sins, and the Love of Religion in thee, both which he has lately graciously begun in thee. Say to him, O my Lord, I have nothing, I am nothing, I can do nothing without thee; These my Resolutions and purposes of amendment of life, of piety and virtue, will upon the next violent Temptation be wavering and tottering again, without thee and thy aid: By that be pleased to keep them warm and stedfast in me; so warm, that no length of time may cause them to grow cold again, no violence of a Temptation break through them.

Fourthly, *Meditate on the guilt and the danger thou runnest into, if thou labour not more sincerely afterward to keep those*

those pious purposes ; and thy Felicity if thou do.

I do not say, so to keep them as to live without Sin, and in an absolutely perfect Estate ; To live wholly without Sins of *frailty* and *meer infirmity, ignorance or sudden surprize*, that is, those that may sometime or other rush on us e're we are a ware ; No, but of not keeping thy Resolutions of Reformation of all *known customary wilful Sin* whatever, and to retain no one such known Iniquity.

Remember, the Sin, if entertained again, at least as familiarly as heretofore, and returned to with as much love as ever, will now ever be a Sin against *more Mercy, against more Love, and against more purposes and resolutions* of returning from it ; O run not thy Soul then upon this increase of Guilt and Danger ; But rather say, O my Soul, shall we so soon forget our Lord, our Master Jesus, to whom we lately vowed obedience, and swore Allegiance, as to entertain and cherish a known Enemy of his within our heart and bosome ? Shall we soon forget, whose *sighing, groaning, bleeding, dying Love* we have seen represented to us lately, and shall we add disingenuity and ingratitude, and a vow-breach to the Sin

it self? And shall we thus keep our integrity, and thus shew our endeavours to keep to our pious resolutions, as tamely to yield up all, lay aside all those considerations, at the return of the next Sin that looks pleasantly, and that comes with fair opportunities for the committing it? shall we do this, not only after so much love, but after having our Covenant renewed and *sealed again* with Almighty God? And after he has graciously declared, that he is willing to be reconciled to us, for what is past, if we heartily give up our selves to him for the future? and when we have promised so to do to our uttermost, and to give up the whole man to him?

In sum, shall we (say) in spite of so much Love, so much mercy and Compassion, such gracious offers on God's part; and then in spite of many advantages, purposes and resolutions on ours, shall we return to our Lusts and Intemperance, as frequently as ever? to our old Oaths and Execrations, our Revenge and Malice, our Covetousness and Injustice, our Pride or Ambition, our Inconsideration or Uncharitableness, to our darling Sin whatever it be? No, my Soul, we will now at last more seriously

ously weigh the Guilt and Danger of so doing; We have begun, and let us go on for Eternity, whomsoever we displease by it, whatever becomes of it as to this present life.

Let us now once more consider, that possibly this may be the last opportunity that our Saviour may give us to be reconcil'd to him, before we go hence and be no more seen; the happy union and agreement between us has been lately sealed, let us never more wilfully and knowingly break it, lest all the old account be charged on us again. Let us therefore now make the best advantage, the best use of it we are able, and return no more to the former state, lest our Lord come and find us in such a breach of our part of our Covenant, and never more permit us to renew it again, till the day of Judgment.

And as now we have by our Lord's infinite mercy, got a good advantage to try once more for a Crown of Life and Glory, let us be watchful and diligent, unwearied and constant in our Race, *that our Lord when he comes, may find us so doing.*

Adieu then (say) once more my old *Dalilahs*, farewell to ye, and welcome Religion,

ligion, welcome my holy Duties, ye that once seemed irksome and tedious to me ; Welcome now as the way and means by which I am to be qualified to have my Lord's merits applied to me, to keep me in his favour, and to meet him in his Kingdome.

Welcome my Devotions, ye that once seemed too tedious to me, and to take up too much of my time, the actions I once was even ashamed to be found imployed in ; Welcome, though purchased at never so dear a rate, or expence of time, I am sure I can be no loser by you.

Welcome my Solitudes and Retirements from the World, and my frequent being alone ; I find I can best see and consider the state of my Soul in ye, and though ye were once very disagreeable to me, I now perceive you are advantageous.

Welcome ye Christian Temperance and Sobriety, and Purity and Chastity, whatever self-denials or reproaches ye may possibly cost me, no matter, so I may sit at the Feet of Jesus to all Ages.

And welcom Alms and Charity, though ye once seemed expensive to me, and ill bestown ; I now see Cause, infinite Cause to think otherwise, when ye are laid out

out in order to the Inheritance of a Kingdome.

Welcome Humility, Charity, and Forgiveness, and Love of Enemies, ye that once seemed unreasonable, and of all other Duties most disagreeable to flesh and blood, and a heavy yoke ; but I now think otherwise of you, when I consider how excellent an imitation ye are of that blessed Jesus, with whom I lately supt, and at whose Feet I hope to sit, in the mansions of Glory.

Welcome Meekness and Patience, Mortification and Self-denyal, and all that's holy just and good. Welcome all means of my *growth in Grace* ; all the Commands of my Saviour ; Welcome to me, who have resolv'd never more to give out, never to think I have done enough, till all be over, and at an end, in a holy and happy Death in a blessed and joyful Resurrection.

Fifthly and Lastly, *after receiving ; by looking back on this Divine and Heavenly and pleasant Duty, think and meditate, how lovely and chearful and pleasurable, a Religious Life must needs be.*

Say truly, is there not a great Serenity and Calm, and peace of mind, in the being free from Malice, and desires of
Revenge,

Revenge, from Rage & Envy? Is there not a Secret joy and Cheerfulness and Lightfomeness of heart, in offering up Praises and Thanksgivings, and Hymns and Hallelujahs to the Saviour of the World? Is there not a blessed inward Relish and delight and pleasure that flows from the offering up a holy and devout Prayer to him? How great a satisfaction and pleasantness is there in offering up some of our substance to God in Alms? Is there not a great quiet and sedateness, and peace of Soul and mind, in the being free from the hurries, and the shame and follies, and sollicitations of Lustful desires? Is there not an unknown tranquillity of mind in the being freed from proud and vain-glorious and ambitious desires, and in the sitting down at ease with meekness, contentment and humility? Is it not a blessed thing to be freed from the pain and disorders of Intemperance? from the shame and dishonour of Lust? to have subdued, and conquered, and mortified our passions and sinful appetites, and to sit above the reach of them? Must it not needs be a blissful thing, to be freed from those stings and lashings and secret gnawings, that perpetually dwell in the heart of the wicked,
and

and irreligious man? though they are little known to any other but God and his own Soul? Is it not (think you) a great felicity to be freed from the slavery of Sin and the Devil, which are the greatest Tyrants in the World? Can you not now from this short and small experience of these things, be perswaded of the *sweets* and *Delicacies* that dwell with Religion?

Do but ask the holy person, the man of an heavenly Conversation, whether there ever be any thing that greatly discomposes and troubles his serene and calm, and peaceful heart? Ask him again, whether he do not each night lye down in peace, and with an undisturbed Conscience, sleep sweetly and securely, content heartily if his Lord please, to sleep'till the general Resurrection? Ask him, whether he, lying down in peace and Innocence, feels the insupportable horror and amazement of any great guilt when he awakes? No, he awakes as pleasantly as the morning, he no sooner opens his Eyes, but they are darted towards the new *Jerusalem*, before they behold vanities.

Ask him whether he dreads the Face of the Sun, or Men or Devils? Whether he

he greatly dreads the sight of an open Grave, of a winding Sheet, or the name of Death? Know of the pious Soul again, whither there be any real pleasures in a holy retired, and angelical life? and he will tell you, he has found more pleasure in being a devout communicant at his Lord's Table, than ever he found in the commission of the most relishing Iniquity. Ask him further, whether those pleasures do not stay longer with him, than any others? and he must undoubtedly tell you, that as *the pleasures of Sin are but for a small Season*, none of them lasting and continuing; So those of Piety are permanent and abiding.

But now on the other head. Let us a little enquire into the unpeaceful, unpleasant state of the unholy person. Ask him, whether when he is sometimes in the midst of his jollities and pleasures, there do not something within him check and restrain the freedom of his mirth? and often on a sudden turn him into fears and Melancholy? and if he would speak the truth, he must needs confess, that he hath been frequently served so. Alas! this is his guilty Conscience, proceeding from his inconsiderate state of life; this is the fruit and effect of his Crimes, and the

the want of a more frequent and devout communicating.

Enquire of him again, whether he usually lyes down in peace and rest? whether he do not often startle in his sleep, and his very dreams are not terrible? whether he be not hugely apt to be disquieted and discomposed, and disordered, and to fear almost every little noise, and at last awakes with unknown horrors of Guilt upon his heart? This he can doubtless tell you is a sad truth.

Ask of him again, whether, when others take their innocent recreations, and refresh their Spirits with harmless mirth; whither (I say) he do not sometimes sigh and droop, and goes away alone, withdraws into some solitary place, and is there discontented, full of anguish, perplexed and haunted, and when he hears the knel of his departed Neighbours, looks pale, and trembles; and is amazed, being so little prepared for the same state and condition?

Ask him, whether, when he beholds a dead Corps, his blood do not cool and surround his heart? Alas! poor wretch, 'tis his guilty Conscience, his Sins unrepented of, his life unreformed, that are the Causes of these doleful and dismal

Con-

Confusions ; and little (it may be) do the World think, the Iniquities he knows himself guilty of. This, if he would confess, he must needs acknowledge.

Say, now, is it not a blessed Estate of life, to be alwayes freed, and to sit at a distance from these ? to be at peace from these secret tumults and inward horrors ? Why, 'tis Religion and holyness, and frequent communions alone, that can effect it for us.

Say again, when we look back on the state and temper of the pious man, can we choose but think it a blest and peaceful thing, alway to have the Soul in that disposition ? why, 'tis Piety and Virtue, That can alone fix and settle that joy and peace there.

To which state, when you are once (by the assistance of Heaven) arrived, you will find reason to say, O my Soul, how much peace and joy do we find in that State of Life, in which we have reason to hope our Lord is reconciled to us ? How much better is it, how exceedingly beyond the old unreformed, unregenerate course ? how sweet is the consideration of being become from an *Enemy*, a friend of God ? and to think that we have caused joy in Heaven by our returning ? Oh how

how imprudent were we, that we should believe nothing of those things sooner, and could not be brought to believe there was any such contentment and joy in holyness !

How many Dayes and Months and Years of true Peace and Pleasure have we lost, that we had not been acquainted with our Saviour sooner ? That the voice of God, inwardly calling us, often by his holy Spirit, or outwardly by his Embassadors, should so long have been in vain ? Oh that we should not have been persuaded by them to come sooner; *and to tast, and see, how gracious the Lord is.* — That we should scarce ever till now, find by our own Experience, that the wayes of Religious Wisdom, *are wayes of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Prov. 3. 17.

But blessed be God, that he has at last opened our Eyes to behold the wonderful things of his Law, and enclined us to experience and try the sweetness, pleasure and satisfaction, of being in a good measure qualified to have his merits applied to us; that he has given us Grace to experience somewhat of the blisful apprehensions of being in his Favour.

And

And now O my Soul, what infinite reason have we to say, Blessed be the day that ever we came acquainted with our Saviour ! Blessed be the day that ever our disobedient heart was melted into Love of thee, O our dear Redeemer ! And I beseech thee, keep it filled ever with this love, fortified ever with these Resolutions, ever fixt and constant in this temper ; and if there be any thing in it, that yet may displease thee, O make me to know it, and assist me to throw it off for ever !

And when will our Lord come again ? that we may again Sup with him, and feast our selves upon his sacred Body and Blood, and tast this pleasant, most delicious food again ? May he *make no long tarrying*, may it not be long, O may it not be long, before we again either meet him at his Table, meet him in the Air, or meet him in his Kingdom. O what will it be to be always with him, where there is so much secret joy and peace, in this small glymps of him, and at so great distance too !

And now my Soul, seeing we have given up our heart to our dearest Lord ; in this temper let us live, and in this disposition let us dye ; and we hope by
Death

Death we shall come nearer to him, never more to be pulled back again, or in danger to be drawn off from him by the violence of any temptation ; for these shall be done away. And being thus united to him the great Lover of Souls, we shall at last, at his glorious coming, not much dread the *heavens being rolled into a Scroul*, or the Crack and flames of the dying World, or the Trump of the Arch-angel ; but with infinite joy, hear the words.

Arise, & come up hither ; awake, and arise, and come, Take your Crowns, your place on my right hand. Arise, and come and see your new State, and new Condition ; your unknown felicities, and unknown Glories, your endless peace and safety.

Arise and come hither, up to me your Jesus the *Captain of your Salvation ;* Come, and be above the reach of Infelicities and Miseries, Sin and Death for all ages ; and sit down in your Immortality and Rest for ever. Arise, come and partake of those Glories, that cost me your Lord, Sighs, and Groans, and Blood, and Wounds, pangs and Life it self, to purchase it for you : that cost you also so many Dutys ; the Strugling with so many

many temptations, the combating so many Enemies, before you got the Victory; so many difficulties, discouragements, so much shame and reproach, self-denials, and the like, before you were intitled to my Merits, and qualified to receive the benefit of my purchase; Come now, and sit down in their Enjoyment, for above millions of years and ages.

In a word, O my Soul, say, May these hopes be ever in our view, ever in our heart & thoughts. And as we have lately begun for Eternity, upon the Stock of this Hope; so let us by this square and order all the Actions of our lives: That so at last, when we shall come to leave Mortality, our Passage hence may be peacefull, safe, and holy; our Resurrection joyfull, safe and holy: and (through him who is the foundation of our hope) we may not fail to be remembred with mercy in the day of judgment. After which, we may with *Angels, and Arch-Angels, and all the Company of Heaven, laud and magnify his glorious Name, evermore praising him, and Saying Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts, Glory be to thee, O Lord most High, Amen.*

A

A Prayer before the holy Sacrament.

O My dearest Saviour, who wert pleased to suffer death upon the Cross, to purchase Heaven and Salvation for me, and now callest me to a remembrance of that thy dying Love; so fit and trim, and adorn my Soul I beseech thee, that I may not fail, to be now and ever an acceptable guest at thy holy Table.

Let the consideration of my state, and the remembrance of my past sins, lead me to a deep humiliation and contrition for them, and that contrition to intire hatred, a sincere reformation of them, and fixt resolutions of future Love and obedience. O my Saviour, let my Faith, and Charity, and Devotion be, by thy gracious assistance, raised to a Heavenly

venly pitch and temper; that so, whatever thou please to deny me in this lower World, I may never be denied a participation of all the benefits of thy meritorious death and sufferings. I come dear Jesu, I come to renew my Covenant with thee, which I have so miserably broken, by my Sins of Omission and Commission, by my Iniquities of thought word and deed,

† *Here you may mention those grosser Crimes which upon Examination, you find your self to stand guilty of.*

† [particularly by my Sins of ———]

For these and all other my impieties, known and unknown, be pleased

to receive a reconciliation: and let this holy Sacrament prove a sealing of my Pardon in the Court of Heaven, and may I not fail, O my Saviour, together with thy body and blood, to receive new Grace and strength against them. O my Jesu, who hast done and suffered so much for me, and now invite me to come
and

and see it represented to me, be pleased to do this further for me, to grant that it may not be in vain and lost as to me, by mine own default. O let it never be said or remembred of me in the day of Judgment, that I ever appeared before thee in this holy action, without such a wedding Garment, as thou didst mercifully accept; or that I did eat and drink my own damnation. And though my Iniquities are great; great like thy Sorrows, and great like thy sufferings, which I am coming to commemorate; yet because they are infinitely less than thy Mercies and thy Merits; Pitty me, O Lord pity me, accept me, O my God accept me, for lo I come to do thy will; and grant that I may ever hereafter live the life of Grace, in a state acceptable to thee; that so by thine Agony and bloody sweat, by thy Cross and Passion, by thy precious death and burial, by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, which I

G

am

am coming to remember, my past Iniquities being done away, I may now at length be more closely united to thee. That I may come back again from thy Table with joy and thanks, and Love and adoration, and comfort and satisfaction. O that at last my Resolutions may be fixt, and stedfast ; the conquest of these Sins which I can easily remember have often foiled me, may be such, that they may no more prevail against me, and get the Dominion over me. And that now thou mayest abide with me forever, and the holy Spirit may guide me into the paths of a cheerful, sincere, and persevering Holyness ; that so having past my days that are to come, in the watchfulness and diligence, and Labours of Repentance and a holy Life ; I may live with thee, and dye with thee, and rise again with thee, and then ever sit at thy Feet in the mansions of Glory , O my dearest Saviour, *Amen.*

*A Thanksgiving and Prayer after
Receiving.*

O Holy and Eternal Jesu; I praise thee, I bless thee, I worship thee, I glorifie thee, I give thee thanks for those invaluable mercies from the participation of which I lately came; for these representations of thy bleeding, dying love to me; Love infinite, Love unspeakable, Love eternal, Love for me before I was born. O compassionate Jesu! who am I, that thou shouldest please to receive me, to renew my part of the Covenant of Grace with thee, who have so frequently, so miserably broken it? O let the return which now I may ever hereafter make, for so much love, let it be Love and Obedience. Love, in some measure great like thine, even to death it self; and let my Obedience be as early as I can now make it, and as chearful and universal, sincere and constant. O let

the deep remembrance of this Love of thine, constrain me to such an obedience, Let neither the Love of the World, the allurements and baits of the flesh, or the temptations of the Devil, ever force or draw me off from such an obedience. O my dear Redeemer, though I have now again resolved against all wilful known Sin,

† *Here you may mention the Sin to which you are most tempted.*

[particularly against the Sin of †—] and promised thee an obedience; yet without the continuance

of thy gracious aid and assistance, I shall most certainly fall again, upon the very next temptation. Secure me therefore O Lord, by that, secure me, save Lord or I perish: Whatever thou pleasest to deny me here, deny me not, I beseech thee O Lord, I beseech thee, the assistance of that Grace of thine, without which, my Spiritual Enemies will soon prevail over me again. Make me to see and consider, the necessity of avoiding all
appea-

appearance of evil, all those occasions of my falling, and to get instantly out of the way of Sin, whatever I am like to lose by it, whatever the disadvantage be in this World: Let, O let my Sacramental vows, and promises, and Resolutions, be never so broken again, as they have sometime been formerly; but O my Jesu, let my Sins and Iniquities ever hereafter appear so odious, and hateful to me, as they did then when I was at my Lord's Table. O let them still be as vile and deformed as they then seemed to me. Let none of my pious purposes, and holy Resolutions, be ever forgotten by me [particularly. † —] Let neither the cares of the World, nor the disappointments of my expectations in the affairs of it; nor the malice of my Enemies, the charitable reproofs of my friends, the trespasses of my Neighbours, the

† Here again, if you think fit, you may mention any holy Resolution made by you.

hardness of my Labours, the Importunity and earnestness of my Creditors, the neglects and injustices of my Debtors, any fears of being poor, any distrusts concerning a provision, for my posterity; or my being despised or reproached by any man, or my Losses of the World, nor that World of Temptations, through which I know I am to pass, ever put my Soul out of frame, or lead me to a discontented, inconsiderate, and troubled Spirit, or put my holy purposes out of my mind: but that in the midst of these and all other tumults of the World, I may alway fly to Religion, and take Sanctuary there, and be safe and rest there, and delight to do thy will, and be ready to offer up my Soul and Body to thy Service. That so the rest of my dayes that are yet to come in this World may be passed away in Humility and Charity, in righteousness and holiness, in mortification and self-denial, in love and obedience

ence

ence to thee O holy and Eternal
Jesu. *Amen.*

A pious Resolution, which may be solemnly made (on their Knees) by them, who since their Baptism, have had no opportunity to be confirmed by the Bishop: but yet (being ready and desirous to be confirmed) are willing to receive the Holy Sacrament.

DRead Majesty of Heaven and Earth! — Forasmuch as thou hast received me in my Baptism into the Covenant of Grace, (sealed by the blood of Jesus) when an Infant; Lord, I being now come to the knowledge of it, do on my bended knees humbly and thankfully own and acknowledge that infinite favour, and adore thy mercy. And do really and heartily take upon my self, what was then engaged for me, and by the

help of thy Grace, (which I earnestly beg) do resolve to perform with an hearty sincerity my part of that Covenant, to the end of my dayes. I believe what was then promised I should believe, Lord help my unbelief. I renounce in my own person, what was then promised I should renounce. And for the conditions required on my part, (to wit) a joynt performance of all the Gospel-Graces and Duties, as Faith, Hope, Charity, Self-denyal, Repentance, and the rest, and an obedience to all of them in sincerity, thò with weakness and Imperfection; Lord, I humbly and thankfully embrace and accept of them, and declare my hearty desires and resolutions to discharge them acceptably, through the holy Jesus. And before thee O holy Trinity, and the whole Court of Heaven, I do solemnly make this Declaration, and renew my Baptifmal Covenant Promise and Engagement.
Amen.

If you are able to write, you may write out a Copy of these Words ; and having repeated them before God with a deep humility and pious affections, you may add these words to it, [*and sign it on my bended knees*] And then before you rise, subscribe your name to it, and the day of the month.

January 1. 1681.

N. N.

Ever after remembring, that now you have dedicated your self to God, and that if you live the rest of your life according to these beginnings, your passing over the World shall be safe and holy ; and you be intituled to the Merits of your Redeemer, and qualified to receive the benefits of his death and sufferings.

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An act of Resolution which may be humbly and devoutly made on their knees, by those who since their last receiving the holy Sacrament, have (through the violence of a Temptation, and it's daily solicitation, though constantly resisted) sometime fallen into some one act of known wilful Sin.

DRead Majesty of Heaven and Earth. Forasmuch as I, who was early dedicated to thee by Baptism, and have frequently renewed that Covenant at thy holy Table, have yet sadly fallen from my Baptismal holyness, and broken my vows and resolutions even since the last Sacrament, grieving thy holy Spirit, wounding my Soul, and provoking thy displeasure, setting my self back
 † *Here you may mention the Sin.* deplorably in my journey toward Heaven, by the Sin of † —] best known to thee when and where committed.

mitted: I do now heartily accuse and judge, and condemn my self for it, and for all other known and secret Sins; and do earnestly repent my self of it, and desire to rise from it again by a sincere Resolution of amendment of life, a greater watchfulness and intire obedience; and this I solemnly on my bended knees declare before thee O holy Trinity: and do now likewise humbly beg fresh assistances of the holy Spirit to enable me to be more constant in my holy Resolutions, and to please thee better. And for my Lord Jesus sake, and in his Name, and for thy loves sake to mankind, thy pittty and compassions sake, humbly beg, humbly hope, my pardon may be as certainly now sealed in Heaven, as I make this declaration here on earth. Mercy O my God, mercy, for the sake of that immaculate Lamb, that takes away the Sins of the World. *Amen.*

Here.

Here again, if you are able to write, and sincerely do desire to rise from the Sin by Repentance, you may before you go to the holy Table, write out a Copy of these Words; and having repeated them with a penitent heart, subscribe your name on your bended knees, as also the day when you made this Resolution.

January 1. 1681.

N. N.

That so you may the better discern, what progress your soul makes, in its Victory over all known Sin.

“For no man can well observe his own
 “growth in Grace, but
Bishop Taylor “by accounting sel-
Rule of holy dy- “domer returns of Sin,
ing. “and a more frequent
 “victory over tempta-
 “tions; concerning which every man
 “makes his observations, according as he
 “makes his inquiries and search after
 “himself.

*A Prayer before the Sacrament; which
may be used by them, who never re-
ceived it before.*

O Blessed Saviour and Redeem-
er ! who wert pleased to ad-
mit me into thy holy Church by the
Waters of Baptism in my Infant
dayes before I knew it ; I do now,
being by thy Grace come to the
knowledge of it, from the bottom
of my heart adore and bless thee
for that mercy, and with a penitent
heart, humbly and earnestly beg thy
pardon for my great abuses of it,
that I should so wretchedly as I have,
stained and polluted those white and
innocent Robes which I then put on;
and for my known and unknown
breaches of those vows and promises,
which were then made in my name.
O my Lord, I am accused, judged and
condemned by my own Conscience.
But O my Jesu, whose sacred side
once dropt Water and Blood for me;

as

as thou hast admitted me to the Water when I was baptized, so be thou now graciously pleased to admit me to the Blood too, and to partake of all the benefits of it, that as I early partaked of the cleansing of the one, so I may now receive the healing virtue of the other ; and let all my Iniquities I beseech thee, that have been adventured on by me since my Baptism to this present hour, be to thee as if they had never been at all. O that I could now go to thy Table with the like innocence that I came from the waters of Regeneration ; But seeing I cannot, O my Jesu, who wert pleas'd to bring me to the honour and priviledge of Baptism, before I could beg or desire it, be thou likewise pleased, by thy grace to carry me prepared to thy Table, who can, and do earnestly desire and beg this of thee ; and as thou wert pleased then to make me a lamb of thy flock, so deny me not the favour (how unworthy soever I have hitherto

therto lived of it) of being one of those faithful Sheep of thy fold, that hear thy voice. O my Lord, as I was never yet at thy Table, and come a stranger to this Heavenly feast; so I intreat thee, let me not miss of the mercy of being a welcome and acceptable guest there. O make me to understand and consider the advantage that I have above many others, who may now (by thy Grace) never be an unworthy Communicant. Do thou therefore by thy gracious intercession supply my ignorance, and by thy Mercy and Merits, pitty and pardon the vanities and sins and follies of my youthful state, [particularly †—] and receive me with the Love and Compassion and Tenderneſs of a Parent: that ſo I may love thee, and adore thee, and bleſs thee, and obey thee betimes; and may taſt of the ſweets and delicacies of an early Religion and Holyness

† *Here you may mention the particulars.*

lyness. I come then O my Jesu, I come to give thee this first solemn Testimony of my Love to thee, and to receive the first great tokens of thy Love to me. O be pleased so feelingly to touch my heart now at the first with a deep sence of Love to thee and thy Religion, that I may ever hereafter rejoyce in all opportunities of a holy Sacrament, and have a never-ceasing Love to those holy Mysteries. Do thou vouchsafe O my dear Redeemer, at this our first most solemn meeting, to bring all those Graces along with thee, which thou would'st have my Soul to be fitted with, and fix them there. I beseech thee. O my Lord I was early devoted to thee by others, but suffer me now to dedicate my self to thee. Come Lord Jesu, come then, take possession of my heart, I beseech thee, before ever the World, Flesh, or Devil, get any more footing there; and if either of them have got any already, for my great neglects to present
my

my self to thee, and opening the door of it to thee sooner, turn out, O my Lord turn them out thence, and with the rest of thy Church accept me, even me also O my Father. Let me take thee into my hand, O my dear Lord, and place thee in my heart, before ever any more lusts or follies be admitted there; and then be thou pleased to take me by the hand, and place me in thy heart, that there I may live, and there I may dye. Finally O my Lord, let all my past Iniquities I beseech thee, be so done away, that thou mayst receive me so, as if I were but now come from the Waters of Baptism.

With such hopes as these, with such desires as these, I come to lay my self at thy feet, O blessed Saviour and Redecmer, *Amen.*

A Prayer and Thanksgiving after the holy Sacrament, to be used only by such, as had never received it before.

O Holy and merciful Jesus! by whom the mercies of Eternity are conveyed to mankind; I bless and praise and thank thee, with my whole heart, and all the powers of my Soul, for this first admittance of me to the mercy and the privileges of the Holy Sacrament of thy Body and Blood; for my having lately partaked of some of these joyes and comforts that are alone to be found with thee and in thy Service, and till now were unknown to me.

O that having had the mercy and advantage of renewing my Covenant with thee, I may now at least begin to spend my days, (as far as ever the necessary business of this present life will permit me) in thy Service, in all the parts of piety and
virtue;

virtue; in works of Mercy and Charity and Devotion, in meekness and humility, in self-denial and Repentance, in Chastity and Temperance, in all that's holy just and good. O my Lord! 'tis the serious desire and resolution of my Soul thus to do; that so early beginning to lay up my treasure in Heaven, I may (by thy Grace) have a good account there in the Records of Eternity, at the end of my fixty or seventy ycars. O my Jesu! whatever thou pleasest else to deny me here, deny me not a grant of this my request I beseech thee; that those desires and resolutions of mine, may in some good measure be accomplished and effected. Let not the allurements and perswasions of my Companions, ever entice me from my Duty, or the jeers or reproaches of any man whatever, fright me from my Innocence. O let me never suffer my self to be laught out of my Religion, or be ashamed or affraid to perform my
holy

holy Duties before the face of any man, but be ever looking unto Jesus; and let me in view of him be content to endure the Cross and despise the shame, or whatever else shall befall me for the sake of Piety and Virtue, or obedience to any one Command of thine: Let my youthful heart be never much inflam'd with any Loves, or passions or desires, but those of thee and thy holy Religion. O my Lord, grant, that I may be perswaded to understand and consider, what a great advantage I have, of devoting and giving up my first and best dayes to Religion and Piety; and that now is my time to shew, that I am lead to Religion by Love, and by my choice, and not driven to it only by the fears and horrors of an approaching Grave: and that I may often and betimes consider, with how much greater comfort I shall leave Mortality, if I may be able then to remember an early Love and Obedience to thee

thee O Jesu. Let me who have liv'd in thy family ever since I was baptized, now at least begin to feel my self more powerfully drawn to thee than ever. O make me in the beginning of my dayes, to be truly serious and considerate ; to begin to withdraw from the World sometimes, and to love to be sometime alone, to look into the state of my Soul, and provide for a joyful Resurrection. Make me to think it the greatest happiness in this World to choose thee O blessed Jesu, sometimes for my Lord and Master, and to look on Religion as the Rest and Delight, and Satisfaction of my Soul. O fill my Soul with such a Love to thee, and to those holy Mysteries in which I commemorate a dying Lord, that I may be able to think it long, before I have an opportunity to come to feast upon thy Body and Blood again ; and that as I grow in years, I may in some measure grow in Grace, and in the Divine favour.

To

To this end, O that I may pass safely through this dangerous state of life, freed from the Intemperance and Lusts, the folly and vanity, the heedlesness and inconsideration, that often attends it : and that I may the better be able thus to do, Lord I now deliver up to thee, all my Affections and Desires, to be guided and directed by thy Holy Spirit ; I am willing to submit them all to thee, that so as I have lately begun for Eternity, I may go on, and prosper, and in an acceptable measure, now keep up to the purity and Innocence of my first sanctification, and never more give out, till I come to the end of my hopes, and the beginning of my joyes, and be presented to my Father, pure and spotless, in the great day of Rewards and Punishments, by thee O holy and merciful Jesus, *Amen.*

*A Prayer which may be used by them,
who before they come to the Sacra-
ment, set apart something to be then
offered up to God in Alms.*

O Merciful Lord ! from whom every good gift comes, and by whose bounty alone it is, that I enjoy any thing which I possess ; I humbly offer up this small return of it to thee, for the use of them whom thou hast made thy receivers, the poor and the needy. Let not the smalness of the offering, or any unworthyness of mine, I beseech thee, keep it from being an acceptable Alms and Oblation to thee ; and let not the abuse of any of my possessions that have been laid out on Sin and Folly, Gluttony or Vanity, Lust or Intemperance, Revenge or Malice, be ever charged or remembered against me, in the day of Judgment. And O my God take from me a Covetous and Illiberal heart,
and

144 *Of the Sacrament*

and teach me the truely Christian
measures of Charity, in Giving, and
Forgiving for Jesus sake, *Amen.*

A

A Prayer for the Grace of Charity in forgiving, with particular reference to that petition in our Lord's Prayer, [forgive us our trespasses as we forgive, &c.] which may be used either before the Sacrament, or any other time.

O Blessed and holy Jesus ! who wert the great Example of Giving and Forgiving, dying for Enemies, ready and willing to forgive Iniquity and Sin, and to give Heaven and Glory to all true Penitents ; Give me Grace to write after all this blessed Copy of thine in an acceptable measure. And if there be, or has been any offender or trespasser against me, whom I have not forgiven, according to thy Will, and the measures of the Gospel, forgive me O blessed Jesu, and let me not fail to receive a full pardon of that Iniquity, for thy mercies sake. O let my desires and Petitions of being
H for-

forgiven as I forgive, never be answered according to that instance whatsoever it were, or ever shall be, wherein I have not heretofore, or (through the frailty of humane nature, or any sudden surprize or inconsideration) should not hereafter at any time, keep up to thy sacred Rule and Will. And O Lord guide and direct me for the Remainder of my dayes in the true measures of Patience and forbearance, and take from me all malice and hatred, and grudgings and heart-burnings, and desires of Revenge on any that has injured me; and plant in my Soul, I humbly and earnestly beseech thee, the true Charity and forgiveness. O Lord, for thy mercies sake, thy Love's sake to mankind, so pittie me, and pardon all my former gratifications of my revengeful humour, that they may never be so charged on me or remembered, as to hinder thy forgiveness of me: And whomsoever, and whereinsoever I have forgiven any, freely
and

and fully and truly, be thou pleased
O my dear Redeemer, that all my
former, and all my future petitions
may be heard and granted, accord-
ing to that instance; And whensoever
I have already, or ever shall re-
quest to be forgiven as I forgive, O
merciful Lord, forgive me, as I then
forgive. And grant, that for the fu-
ture I may so Copy out the blessed
pattern which thou hast left me, that
no Enemies, Persecuters, Slanderers,
Revilers, or Injurious Persons, may
ever be able to conquer my love to-
wards them: "But that
"I may still bear a kind *Christ. Sacrif.*
"and tender heart to the most out-
"raged and provoking Spirits, bles-
"sing those that curse me, praying
"for those who despightfully use
"me, returning Courtesies for as-
"fronts and injuries; bewailing their
"Sins, pittying their miseries, and
"endeavouring to overcome evil with
"good. Endow me with such a wife,
"considering, and sober Spirit, that I
H 2 "may

“may ever prefer the example of
“thee my Lord and Master, before
“all the Customs and fashions of this
“World : Enduring the mockeries,
“the shame and contempt which may
“be cast upon me, for the following
“his forgiveness and patience. And
“do thou O God, to whom venge-
“ance belongeth , pardon also and
“forgive those by whom I suffer
“wrongfully ; Spare them good
“Lord, spare them, and deny them
“not the Grace of Repentance, that
“we may live together in eternal
“Love and Friendship with thee, O
“blessed and holy Jesus. *Amen.*

*Our Father, which art in Heaven ; Hal-
lowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy
will be done in earth, As it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And for-
give us our trespasses, As we forgive them
that trespass against us. And lead us not into
temptation ; But deliver us from evil : for
thine is the Kingdom, And the Power, And
the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.*

The Bookseller to the Reader.

THE absence of the Author, and his inconvenient distance from *London*, hath occasioned these *Errata's* to escape the Press. The Printer thinks it the best instance of pardon, if his Escapes be not laid upon the Author, and he hopes they are no greater than an ordinary understanding may amend, and a little charity may forgive.

R. Royston.

ERRATA.

PAge 3. line 5. for *tanta*, read *tacita* : p. 11. l. 9. for *as*, r. *all* : p. 14. l. 27. r. *perform it* : p. 31. l. 30. r. *said do this*. If : p. 33. l. 13. for *lifted*, r. *lifted* : p. 33. l. 20. r. *a solemn* : p. 35. l. 4. r. *to come* : p. 39. l. 12. for *could*, r. *would* : p. 46. l. 21. dele *to* : p. 48. l. 9. for *never*, r. *ever* : l. 22. dele *I* : p. 99. l. 23. for *great*, r. *dangerous* : p. 100. l. 5. dele *to* : p. 112. l. 17. for *head*, r. *hand* : p. 116. l. 23. for *where*, r. *when* : p. 147. l. 9. r. *forgave* : l. 17. r. *enraged*.

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